

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS OF THE RURAL CHURCH

by

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INTRODUCTION

The first purpose was to study the historical and psychological processes of the rural church in the United States in order to obtain a background for the present economic and social conditions in this field. The second purpose was to make a review of the conditions over a period of time through a study of a large number of rural church and community surveys, so as to gain an estimate of the present general conditions and trends throughout the United States. A special study was to be made of a chosen area in Kansas in order to compare and evaluate the findings with the general conditions. The third purpose of the study was to offer suggestions for remedies of ills that might exist in the rural churches throughout the chosen area.

HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

A knowledge of the historical and psychological processes is necessary to the understanding of any contemporary social phenomena. Historically, the rural church began with the first colonial settlements; therefore, it was transplanted from Europe and in many ways retained European customs. As there were no cities the first American churches were rural. Thus, the rural church is at the bottom of our

American church; or, fundamentally, the American church is rural. The organization of the first American churches was an attempt on the part of the persecuted people who came to this country to do as they pleased. So, the American rural church was born out of protest with the result that individual, independent churches, practicing as they pleased arose. We did not allow secession in government, but it was a practice in the early American church.

In England the community and parish were coexisting, coextensive. It was an impossibility to have church division, that is, to have the church and state units of control separate and distinct. In New England the governmental unit was the town and the church unit, the parish.

"One of the traditions of the New England States is the custom of considering the town or township as the unit for the local government. Here town and township are used interchangeably to indicate a rural section of a few miles square, probably with one or more villages which serve as trading centers. Several towns are grouped together to form a county, but the latter has little significance except in handling legal and criminal matters. Each county has a shire town or county seat where court is held and where the jail is located. Some counties appoint officers for the general supervision of roads and schools, but more often each town

assumes the entire responsibility."¹

The church was the community center. At the center of the parish, usually the geographical center, there was a meeting house. Some such houses were supported by taxation. They were the scenes of social activities other than religious ones. Once a year a public meeting was held at this community center to choose the officers for the parish. From these meetings the first schools arose to teach children to read the Bible, out of the idea that children needed to read the Bible to be saved. The people of the community assembled at the meeting house for practically all occasions.

The rural preacher is an outstanding figure in the study of the history of the American church. He was called a pastor, clergyman or elder. There was one clergyman to a parish and this one found it no struggle to support himself; he was permanent in that parish. He was a most highly educated man to whom every one looked and whom all respected. He always had a library, usually being the only person in the community possessing books. He received his education abroad. Occasionally he would go outside of his parish to a convention or conference, but he was the only one who did.

1. Stiner, Jesse Frederick, "The American Community in Action." P. 195.

The rural clergyman was probably the best paid and best dressed man in the parish. His pay was goods plus some money, but no one else in the community received real money income, so his pay was largely in goods. However, he had need of actual money for books, clothes, travel, etc. So, economically, he had absolute independence. If a young man wanted to become a clergyman he would be an understudy of one for some time. Later, the parish would send him to Oxford for the purpose of preparing him for the clergy. A parish saw that it was never without a pastor; when the old clergyman died the young man was prepared and ready to take his place.

As the number and size of communities and parishes grew, colonies were established and state influence and patronage of the church increased. The colony of Massachusetts Bay affords a good example of the extent to which Church and State were related.

"In considering the government of Massachusetts in relation to the church, we must remember that until 1692 there were two separate governments, and in them the relations of Church and State were not exactly similar. In connection with the Articles of Agreement submitted to the Virginia Company, the history, in part, of the Plymouth Colony has already been considered. The church placed first upon a voluntary basis, was taken as early as 1657 under the patron-

age of the state and maintained in many towns by a tax upon the people.

From the beginning church and state were intimately associated in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1631 'To the end that the body of the commons may be preserved of honest and good men, it was (likewise) ordered and agreed that for time to come no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic, but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same.' ¹

The General Court assumed that all inhabitants, whether citizens or not, received the benefit of both state and church, and were under obligations to support both. In 1638 the court declared that 'every inhabitant in any town is liable to contribute to all charges, both in church and commonwealth, whereof he doth and may receive benefit; and withal it is also ordered, that every such inhabitant who shall not voluntarily contribute proportionately to his ability, with other freemen of the same town, to all common charges, as well for upholding the ordinances in the churches as otherwise, shall be compelled thereto by assessment and distress to be levied by the constable, or other officer of the town.' And this is not all; the inhabitants were required to attend upon the Lord's day the preaching provided

1. Lauer, Paul E., "Church and State in New England, Studies in Historical and Political Science, Vol. X. The John Hopkins Press - Baltimore, 1892.

for them. Absence from church rendered the offender liable to a fine of five shillings or imprisonment.

"In 1644 there was passed the following law directed against the Baptists; 'It is ordered and agreed that if any person or persons within this jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the administration of the ordinance, or shall deny ----- and shall appear to the Court willfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment.'"¹

"Every town had to be supplied with a minister, and make provision for his support. The law of 1654 says: Forasmuch as it highly tends to the advancement of the Gospel that the ministry thereof be comfortably maintained, and it being the duty of the civil power to use all lawful means for the attaining of that end, and that henceforth there may be established a settled and encouraging maintenance of ministers in all towns and congregations within this jurisdiction, this court doth order that the County Court in every shire shall (upon information given them of any defect of any congregation or township within the shire) order and ap-

1. Lauer, Paul E., "Church and State in New England." Studies in Historical and Political Science. Vol. X. The John Hopkins Press - Baltimore, 1892.

point what maintenance shall be allowed to the ministers of that place, and shall issue out warrants to the select men to assess, and the constable of the said town to collect the same, and distrain the said assessment upon such as shall refuse to pay; and it is hereby declared to be our intentions that an honorable allowance be made to the ministry respecting the ability of the (inhabitants), and if the towns shall find themselves burdened by the assessment of the County Court, they may complain to this court, which shall at all times be ready to give just relief to all men!"¹

In North Carolina, the influence of law, state made of course, to persecute dissenters affords another illustration of State and Church relationships.

"In North Carolina men were persecuted by being harassed by and subjected to laws.

(1) They were required to pay tithes and help support a church other than their own.

(2) They suffered under muster laws, where a distinction was made in favor of the clergymen of the Church of England and against dissenting ministers.

(3) Presbyterian ministers were not allowed to perform the marriage ceremony until 1766. Even then the fee went to the minister of the Church of England. Other Dissenters,

1. Lauer, Paul E., "Church and State in New England." Studies in Historical and Political Science. Vol. X. P. 34. The John Hopkins Press - Baltimore, 1892.

Quakers excepted, were not allowed this right before 1776.

(4) The most infamous section of all, the continued reenactment and enforcement of the Schism Act, which had been repealed in England in 1718. This act exasperated the Dissenters, throttled the few sickly schools that had begun to rise in the province, put a premium on the Establishment and on ignorance, separated the different denominations from each other, hindered free political discussion by keeping men ignorant of political matters, and is directly responsible for the large percentage of ignorance and for the backwardness in intellectual life so characteristic of the state today.

Both the English and colonial governments were responsible for the above state of affairs. The initiative was taken by the home government. It was sanctioned and carried to its literal fulfilment by a powerful set in the colony!¹

One period of American history is characterized as the Westward movement. When this movement began, sometimes all of the people in a community moved to a western community and established their church there. In other cases, individual families moved and met with other families and we find that when as few as three or four families were in the same neighborhood, they would organize their own church in the new neighborhood. The following quotation of Kenyon

1. Weeks, Stephen B., Church and State in North Carolina, P. 51-52. Studies in Historical and Political Science, Vol. 11. The John Hopkins Press, 1893, Baltimore.

Butterfield explains the condition which developed from this:

"The individualism of the American has been nowhere more in evidence than in his rural life. It is true that before the Revolution, New England farmers lived in and migrated by communities, but the winning of the West was mainly a movement of families to family-size farms. Occasionally whole neighborhoods moved, rarely entire communities. It was the individual farmer and his family that became the unit of rural life.

"Of course the pioneer farmers at once took on the simpler forms of social organization, but the groupings followed special interests and were rarely coterminous. The political groupings were wholly arbitrary, as, for example, the school district and the highway district. Indeed the typical surveyor's township, which only theoretically established a strong local political unit, had no relation whatever to social organization. Even voluntary societies, such as churches, farmers' clubs, granges, were motivated chiefly by the desire either to gain personal advantage through segregation or to secure more intensive social life. That is to say, the farmers through these groupings did not consciously make an effort to organize a complete community or to serve an entire community. The groups were essentially cliques."¹

1. Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XV, pp. 46-53.

The following is a typical example of a community and its development:

"In the earliest days no public worship was possible, except for an occasional meeting at some farm. After the Town House and school houses were built, with roads leading to them, religious services became more regular, but there was no resident minister until 1827. The first settlers were nearly all Congregationalists, and about 1830 they felt able, numerically and financially, to build a church. However, the church members were so divided over the choice of a location that the minister left and the project had to be postponed. Meanwhile some Methodists had come to town and felt moved to build a chapel. This added tinder to the conflagration and feeling ran high until the Congregationalists finally succeeded in building a meeting-house in 1841. By this time a few Baptists had moved to Albany, and after borrowing the Methodist chapel for a while they erected a house of worship in 1842. This was somewhat premature and they were still laboring under a burden of debt when the Congregational church was burned four years later. The Baptists then offered to sell half their building to the Congregationalists to be used jointly. While not an ideal arrangement it seemed expedient, and this unusual partnership continued amicably for twenty years. By that time the

Congregationalists were able to rebuild, and sold back their interests in the Baptist edifice. The Methodist chapel and the first Congregational church were at the Center near the Town House, but a village had been growing at a point near Black River a mile and a half west. This was more accessible and a more natural trade center, and was the logical site for the new churches. At the time of all this religious activity in the western part of the town, a small group of "Free Will" Baptists built a church on the creek road near the northeast corner of the town, and the village of South Albany, or the South Village, elected to become Wesleyan Methodist. This was a sect which withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal body when anti-slavery feeling ran high, and was animated by a militant urge to do battle against sin in all its forms. In 1871 a few Irish farmers who had settled in the eastern part of the town were infected with the desire for religious expression, and built a small Catholic church. There were then six churches in this town of less than eight hundred inhabitants."¹

THE GENERAL PROBLEM

"The sectarian spirit that dominated American religious life especially during the early history of this country has made inevitable religious conflicts which in many places

1. Steiner, Jesse Frederick, "The American Community in Action", P. 198.

have brought a severe strain upon community unity. Even before the supremacy of the original Protestant groups was threatened by the later invasion of Jews and Catholics from southern and eastern Europe, the various sects within the Protestant church took their differences in belief and methods of worship so seriously that they were often divided into warring camps. Remnants of this type of religious conflict can be seen today in many small towns and rural communities."¹

"The Federal Census of 1916 reported 227,487 religious organizations in the United States. Of these, 101,477 were rural; 63.7 per cent of them were in the open country and hamlets; 30.7 per cent in villages having from 250 to 2,500 population; and 5.6 per cent in towns or places having from 2,500 to 5,000 population."²

"The total church membership of the United States was 41,925,854. The rural membership was 8,969,603, or 16 per cent of the total population living in the rural area as above stated. Of the rural membership, 49.7 per cent was in the open country and hamlets; 38.8 per cent in villages; and 11.5 per cent in towns. The proportion of the popula-

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1. Steiner, J. F., *The American Community in Action*, P. 26. Henry Holt & Co., New York. 1928.
 2. Morris and Brunner, *"The Town and Country Church in U.S., 1923*, P. 41.

tion of the three areas included in the church membership decreased from town to open country. In the towns it was 24.3 per cent; in the villages, 22.8 per cent and in the open country, 13.1 per cent."¹

"Some 60,127 ministers were serving the rural churches. Less than two-thirds were found devoting their entire time to the ministry. The other third divided their labors; 26.6 per cent of them between two churches; 14.5 per cent between three; and 14.4 per cent between four or more churches."²

"There were 78,093 rural Sunday Schools, enrolling some 6,600,000 members. Of these schools 2,165 were independent of any church. A large per cent of the town and village churches had Sunday Schools, the percentage being 88 for the first and 89 for the second. Of the open country churches but 67 per cent had such schools."³

"There are other evidences that the rural church is declining. C. O. Gill, by means of a study of church registers of forty-nine rural churches, discovered that the total church membership in Winsor County, New York, has declined 1 per cent in twenty years. In Randolph County, Missouri, it was possible to get church records for seventeen churches for ten years, and of twenty-one churches for five years.

1. Morse and Brunner. The Town and Country Church in U. S., 1923. P. 42.

2. Ibid, P. 43.

3. Ibid, P. 43

The decline was 10 per cent in ten years and 3.1 per cent for five years. As we shall see later, there are certain types of rural churches that are almost universally declining."¹

"In McDonald County, Missouri, a study of church membership was made for 1908, 1913, and 1918. The membership of twenty-seven churches in this county had declined 4 per cent in five years and 9.8 per cent in ten years. All of these churches were located in the open country or in small villages. Those in the open country declined over 10 per cent in the ten-year period. A detailed study of membership loss was made in this county. It was found that the country churches added more members by accession than did the city churches, but the city churches added more by letter or statement from other churches. On the other hand, the rural churches lost members by letters and because members quit, while the village churches lost mostly by death. It is apparent that the open-country churches lose members by two means — transfer of members to village churches, and through failure to keep the membership active. The same survey showed that a small percentage of the country church memberships consisted of young people."²

"Both village and open-country churches had few young

1. Rural Sociology, Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 218.

2. Ibid, P. 218.

people and 1 per cent of the village membership consisted of boys and girls between twelve and eighteen years of age, while only 13 per cent of the country church membership consisted of persons of these ages."¹

"In Clermont County, Ohio, R. L. Vogt found but 16 per cent of the membership under twenty-one years of age."²

"In Randolph County, Missouri, 23 per cent of members were under twenty-one years of age. The fact that 50 per cent of the population of the United States consists of persons between the ages of ten and thirty shows that the rural church is failing to enlist a due portion of persons between these ages in its membership."³

"Church attendance is almost universally poor in rural churches. The rural church, in the majority of cases, is not attracting the rural population," according to Carl C. Taylor.⁴

"In Randolph County, Missouri, it was found that the attendance was 61 per cent of the church membership and about 8 per cent of the population. In Pend Oreille County, Washington, the church attendance was over 100 per cent of the

1. Rural Sociology, by Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 218.

2. Vogt, R. L., Introduction to Rural Sociology, PP.305-306, D. Appleton & Co., 1917.

3. Rural Sociology, by Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 218.

4. Ibid, P. 219.

membership but was less than 18 per cent of the population. Other surveys indicated the same condition. In McDonald County, Missouri, it was found that about 15 per cent of the church membership was non-resident and 36 per cent of the resident members were not active; this left but 48 per cent of the actual church membership as active.¹

"Certainly nothing is more indicative of the failure of an institution than for it to close its doors. If the doors of a church building are closed because the membership has moved to another congregation in the country or to some town church, there is no tragedy in the closing. If the closing of the church doors means the death of institutional religion in the community or the loss of active church membership, there is tragedy in the closing. Bricker calculates that there are 21,000 closed or abandoned rural churches in America."²

"The rural survey made in Illinois by the Presbyterian Church calculated that there were 1,600 abandoned churches in that state outside the city of Chicago. It stated further that many of these abandoned churches were in communities which were left without any church."³

1. Rural Sociology, by Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 219.
2. Bricker, G. A., "The Church in Rural America", P. 41, The Standard Press, Cincinnati. 1919.
3. A Rural Survey in Illinois, Department of Church and Country Life, Board of Home Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S., 156 Fifth Ave., New York City.

"Gill located, on the county maps of Ohio, 429 closed or abandoned churches. There was but one county in the state that did not have one or more rural churches either completely abandoned or closed. Sixteen out of the eighty-seven counties had ten or more abandoned or closed rural churches. One county had twenty-five and another twenty-three of these dead rural churches. In one section there were seven abandoned churches within a three-mile radius."¹

"Everything goes to indicate that the pioneer and the first succeeding generation build numerous rural churches, but by the time the third and fourth generations of settlement are reached many of the rural churches go into decay. The abandonment of a few rural churches may not in itself be all bad; but to abandon twenty-five churches in one county, 500 or 600 in one state, and to have the abandonment become universal over the country is a sign of rural church confusion, if not of actual religious decay."²

"The amounts of home-mission money distributed each year by Protestant bodies are large. Five denominations alone are known to give an aggregate of more than \$5,000,000 each year.

Most of the home-mission moneys distributed to churches

1. Rural Sociology, by Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 220.
2. Ibid, P. 221.

are given to native-white churches. In the case of the Presbyterians, the amount turned over to native-white churches was \$946,000 out of \$1,333,000, or more than 70 per cent of the total. In the sample of Protestant Episcopal churches studied, nearly 90 per cent of the money given as aid went to native-white churches. Home-mission grants are, therefore, being used primarily to help native-white rather than Negro, Indian or foreign churches.

The great majority of native-white churches aided are located in rural areas. Out of 2,121 native-white Presbyterian churches, 1,700, or four-fifths, were so located. For the Protestant Episcopal churches studied this proportion was 60 per cent., and for the Baptist it was over 70 per cent.

The fact that by far the largest group of churches receiving aid are native-white churches in rural areas becomes doubly important when it is remembered that a large proportion of the rural churches aided, particularly those in villages, are in communities in which several other Protestant churches are located. Analysis of 343 aided churches, located in small villages of 1,000 population or less, revealed that 205, or nearly 60 per cent of them were in places that had at least one other Protestant church."¹

1. Fry, Luther C., Home Mission Aid. Institute of Social and Religious Research, 370 Seventh Avenue, N. Y. 1928.

This discussion has given, briefly, a general view of the rural church situation throughout the United States. Many surveys have been made during recent years and the findings of all seem to point to the same conditions and conclusions. Newell L. Sims, Professor of Sociology in Oberlin College and an authority in rural sociology says that, "Numerous shortcomings and failures of the rural church are apparent."¹

A general view of the rural church situation is summed up by Mabel Carney in the following way: "In hundreds of rural localities, however, especially outside of New England, where the church problem is rather one of overchurching than of underchurching, there are no local churches, and church attendance in the nearest town, owing to road conditions and other causes, is irregular and infrequent. In other instances church buildings are old and dilapidated, congregations small, pastors underpaid, and all local church history is but a pitiful story of the struggle for existence. Sunday schools, upon the whole are in better condition, but they too are invariably handicapped and at best render only inadequate returns for the effort put into them. Ten thousand church buildings are now out of use and repair

1. Sims, Newell L., Elements of Rural Sociology, P. 358.

in the United States, as an indication of changing belief and conditions, and ten thousand more ought to be out of use.

"Among the chief causes of this distress, as diagnosed by those who have made the most careful analysis of country church conditions, are overlooking and overlapping. By overlooking is meant neglect and the absence of church influence; by overlapping, the multiplication and existence of more separate denominational churches than a community can support. The one means too little church opportunity; the other too much. Unchurched localities are frequent in many sections, especially in the West and Middle West, and their condition is serious. But even the apparent paganism of such communities is desirable to the friction and strife occasioned by overchurching or overlapping."¹

The smallness of the church membership and the failure to provide churches with resident pastors are both direct results of a virulent sectarianism which handicaps the church in numbers and in financial aid per congregation. Gill found an average of five rural churches per township in Ohio. He found that 66 per cent of the rural churches and memberships of 100 or less, 55 per cent had membership of seventy-five or less, and 37 per cent had membership of

1. Carney, Mabel, "Country Life and the Country School." P. 41-42. Row, Peterson & Co., Chicago. 1912.

fifty or less.¹

The extent of church membership and attendance may be an index of the vitality in the religious life. According to studies made by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, "the churches whose membership is less than 100 as a rule do not prosper, and the smaller the membership, the greater the proportion of the churches which are on the decline."²

"Warren H. Wilson gives an example from Pennsylvania of extreme crowding of churches into small compass. In one rural district (town-country) there are 16 churches within a 3-mile radius and 24 churches within a radius of 4 miles!"³

"They are, in the majority of cases, either young ministers serving their apprenticeship in rural churches, while looking forward to better positions in the city, or they are old preachers who can no longer meet the demands of up-to-date city churches. It is inevitable that city churches, with their better salaries, larger congregations, and more adequate equipment should attract the best ministers. Practically no one prepares for the life work of a rural minister. Few preacher training institutions attempt to offer such training. The rural church, because of its low salaries, catches practically all the untrained minis-

1. Rural Sociology, by Carl C. Taylor, 1926, P. 222.

2. Gillette, John M., Rural Sociology, PP 409-410.

3. Wilson, Warren H., Evolution of the Country Community, P. 146.

ters. In Randolph County, Missouri, there were twenty men serving rural churches as ministers. Six of these had only a common school education; seven had from one to three years college education; five had A. B. Degrees and one an M. A. Degree. These data are believed to be fairly typical. Of course, the training of men who are attempting to minister in the country districts varies in both directions. Gill states that the ministers sometimes are actually illiterate. On the other hand, some of the denominations require seminary training beyond the A. B. Degree, and others require their ministers constantly to pursue training courses while actually in charge of some church. In any case, the church is probably led by more poorly equipped leadership than any of our other great social institutions. Certainly, the rural church has the most poorly equipped leadership among the churches.¹

In McDonald County, Missouri, every one of the five ministers who lived in the open country and gave his full time to open country churches was without even grade school educations. The same was true of two ministers who lived in villages and preached for country churches. The other two country preachers had one a common school education and one a denominational college education."²

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 223-224.
2. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 224.

The large majority of preachers are trained in denominational colleges. These colleges are generally small, poorly equipped, poorly supported, and their faculty so limited that the teachers are compelled to carry such heavy teaching schedules that they cannot do their best. Furthermore, the curricula of the denominational colleges are not such as to adequately prepare men for the rural ministry. Their academic courses are not up to the standard of other institutions of higher learning. The preacher training courses consist too much of Homiletics, Hermeneutics, Exegesis, Church History, and Systematic Theology. Consequently men are not trained in the social sciences, psychology, and science, much less in agriculture. A preacher who is not trained to a fairly thorough appreciation of the problems of agriculture need not expect to be taken into the council of farmers concerning their major economic and social problems.¹

The training of men in theological seminaries has not been of a kind to equip highly serviceable men for country parishes. It has been deficient for securing community leadership anywhere, since little attention has been paid to instilling a sympathetic understanding of community conditions and problems. The traditional theological training

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 224.

has been remote from social and economic considerations, scientific teaching has been tabooed or given little respect so that dogmatic and so-called "spiritual" preaching has prevailed. All theological students, notwithstanding the great diversity of religious fields as to conditions and needs, have been and now are, commonly, given the same kind of preparation. Consequently, the man who located in the country has understood little of the peculiar problems rural people have to meet. His preaching and ministrations have not been of a sort to make a vital appeal and his ability to take the lead in the direction of constructive betterment has been pathetically lacking.¹

"The physical equipment of the rural church is almost universally poor. Even the live, wideawake church organizations which have a building and equipment of which they are proud, would be compelled to acknowledge their deficiencies when compared with the equipment of a modern city church. Rural church buildings, like all other buildings, carry with them the tragedy of being sound physically, long after they are inadequate to meet the needs of the new programs."²

"The large majority of rural churches are one-room buildings, equipped for preaching services only. The result

1. Gillette, John M., Rural Sociology, P.P. 413-414.

2. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 229.

is that no efficient Sunday School can be conducted because of lack of classrooms and no social or recreation programs can be carried out because of inadequate auditorium space. The churches are so little used, the membership is so small and the financial support so meagre that the equipment is often in a state of decay. The heating of many of the rural churches is so poor that it handicaps, sometimes completely eliminates, the church programs during winter months. The floor, seats, walls, windows, and pulpit are often anything but attractive. Almost universally the church building and equipment is below the housing standard of the homes of the community.¹

The following statement of facts is representative of rural church equipment: In Green and Clermont counties, Ohio, 50 per cent of the churches have but one room; 61 per cent are wooden structures. In Montgomery County, Maryland, 55 per cent of the buildings are one-room. In Sedgwick County, Kansas, 62 per cent of the buildings are one room and the average value of open country churches is \$2,680. In Randolph County, Missouri, all the churches are one-room and 89 per cent are wood structures. In Southwestern Ohio nearly one-half of the edifices are valued at less than \$1,000, of the 378 church buildings, 378 are one-room, only

1. Taylor, Carl C. Rural Sociology, P. 229.

90 percent of the churches are heated with stoves, 71 percent are lighted with oil and only 3 percent have horse sheds."¹

"The rural church is poorly supported financially. This is not to assert that rural church members do not pay well for what they get from their churches, or even to assert that rural church members do not subscribe per capita financial support in just as great ratio as do city members. It is to say that per church organization the rural church is inadequately supported. Its physical equipment value is low. Its minister is poorly paid, its support of extra preaching programs is meagre."²

A study of the one-fourth-time churches of one whole denomination in the state of Missouri found the per capita contribution to be \$3. The per capita for all the churches of the nation was seven dollars and six cents in 1920.³

In Pend Oreille County, Washington, the average rural church raised but \$311 annually while the average village church raised \$1,258.71. In this county, the per capita disbursements per rural church members were almost 50 percent greater than those of village members.⁴

A careful study of the findings of numerous rural sur-

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, PP. 229-230

2. Ibid, P. 230.

3. Warburton, S. R., Year Book of the Churches, P. 197.

4. Brunner, E. De S.

veys will justify the assertion that the farmer is willing adequately to support an efficient church program. Wherever his support is short, it is because his church does not justify more adequate support. The per member support tends to vary in direct ratio to services rendered by the church. The shortcomings are in the weak church organization because of overchuraching and sectarian division.

The rural minister is poorly supported for about the same reason. He is not generally representative of the best trained and most experienced of his profession. The organization of his work is divided between two, four, and sometimes as many as seven churches. This makes it impossible for him to render valuable service to any one church.¹

Gill found that in 1917, 688 pastors of rural churches in Ohio received on the average \$993 per year, and 188 pastors of the United Bretheren Church received an average annual salary of \$787.² This is poor support for ministers but is no evidence that the rural church member is not contributing his share to the propagation of religion. Rather it is proof that the dissipation of church organization is failing to give the minister adequate support in somewhat the same ratio as it is failing to perform the whole task

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 231.

2. Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., "Six Thousand Country Churches, P. 122.

of institutionalized religion.¹

METHOD OF SURVEY

A preliminary study of the history and problems of our rural church throughout the United States was made through a thorough review of the available literature in the field. (See References, . Pages 83 to 85) A very large number of printed reports of rural surveys were studied and compared both for their content and method of procedure.

The first step in making the survey was to locate "key" persons with whom to work throughout the area selected. The county school superintendents of the two counties were visited and both offered their cooperation in the work.

Mrs. Ida Grammer, superintendent of the Geary County schools, gave a complete list of the active and inactive rural churches in Geary County and also located each on a county map. She submitted a list of the ministers in charge and also the names of other persons whom she thought would be capable and willing to give correct information. Miss Alta Hepler, school superintendent in Riley County, was new in her position and could not give complete lists, but gave some which formed a good working basis. Lists of the ministers, Sunday School superintendents and other persons were

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology, P. 231.

I.

Religious Situation in General:

1. Name of church
2. Denomination
3. In what township?
4. When was church organized?
5. When was church built?

II.

Equipment and Finance:

1. How many rooms to church building?
2. Is building stone, brick, or frame?
3. Parking shed?
4. Is a parsonage owned?
5. Resident minister
6. Salary of minister
7. Does he serve any other church regularly?
8. Average valuation of church, etc.
9. Any financial system used?
10. Is mission aid received and amount annually?
11. Does minister have another occupation?

III.

Social Aspects:

1. Sunday School
2. Women's organizations - Men's organizations
3. Young peoples organizations

IV.

Attendance:

1. Approximate membership in 1920____ and in 1929____
2. Approximate attendance in 1920____ and in 1929____
3. Sunday School attendance in 1920____ and in 1929____
4. Why do you think there has been an increase or decrease in church membership, in attendance and in Sunday School.

Any general information that you may add will be appreciated

KANSAS

EVERY-COMMUNITY SURVEY

33

Name of Township _____ County _____

Blank filled out by (name) _____ Address _____

Date _____, 192 _____

I. Population:

1. Number

In City, Village or Hamlet Name	Population	Is population increasing, stationary or declining?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
In the Open Country	_____	_____
Total	_____	

2. Of total population, give number who are Native White _____, Negro _____,
Foreign (list each Nationality separately) _____

Is composition of population changing? _____ In what way? _____

3. Note in order of importance the chief sources of support of the population: agriculture _____,
mining _____, lumbering _____, manufacturing _____, resorts _____, or _____

II. Religious Life:

1. Is there a Y.M.C.A.? _____ Y.W.C.A.? _____ Local Federation or Council of Churches?
_____ Ministers' Association? _____ Sunday School Association or Union? _____

2. Is there regular cooperation of Churches in D. V. B. S.? _____ in week-day Religious Instruction?
_____ in Evangelistic Campaigns? _____ in holding Union Services? _____ In other forms of
activity? _____

3. Is any neighborhood in this town unprovided with regular religious service? (If so give name, popu-
lation and distance from nearest church.) _____

(OVER)

4. Churches. (Indicate exact location of each on a map, designating by a key number corresponding to order of entry on this form.)

34

Name	Location	Denomination	Membership		Name	Minister Where Resident	No. of other Churches served	Am't of Mission Aid Received
			Church	S. S.				
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								
15.								
16.								
17.								
18.								
19.								
20.								

5. Are there any abandoned Churches in this township? If so give

Name	Location	Denomination	When Abandoned	Why Abandoned	Present use to which property is used
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

secured from the officers of the Riley County Sunday School Association.

Letters of inquiry asking for cooperation were sent to all of the persons whose names were on these lists. The result was favorable returns from almost every person. In some cases three and four persons to a church offered their assistance.

Pages 33 and 34 are forms of questionnaires which were sent to each individual offering cooperation. Within ten days the questionnaires were returned, properly filled out. One questionnaire from each church was selected and the information tabulated.

The first tabulation of information was checked by the other questionnaires. In some cases, one person would report on all churches of a whole township as well as his church which gave a great deal of duplication and was beneficial in checking as there were as many as five and six checks on some churches. All the information compared favorably.

Further check was made by attending the Riley County Sunday School Convention at Riley, Kansas, on January 29, 1929. At this meeting it was convenient to confer with the majority of the "key" persons who were cooperating in the Riley County survey.

Personal calls were made to a number of the key persons for the purpose of securing extra information and also to get a view of the community as well as the physical condition of the churches. This was especially necessary in the case of the inactive churches. A personal visit was made to Father C. J. Roach of Ogden, Riley County, for information concerning the two Catholic churches.

Final check was made on the information by a visit to Mrs. T. M. Wood, Keats, Kansas, who has been Riley County Sunday School Secretary for a number of years. The information was compared with her records and also with the records of a number of church directories of the various denominations.

Large charts were made, showing a number of the results of the survey, and were presented before the Conference of the Kansas State Council of Churches at Wichita, Kansas, February 13, 1929. Dr. H. N. Morse, Supervisor of Surveys for the Home Missions Council was the presiding officer at this meeting. The charts were approved by those present at this conference, who were familiar with the area studied, as presenting a true picture of rural church conditions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA SURVEYED

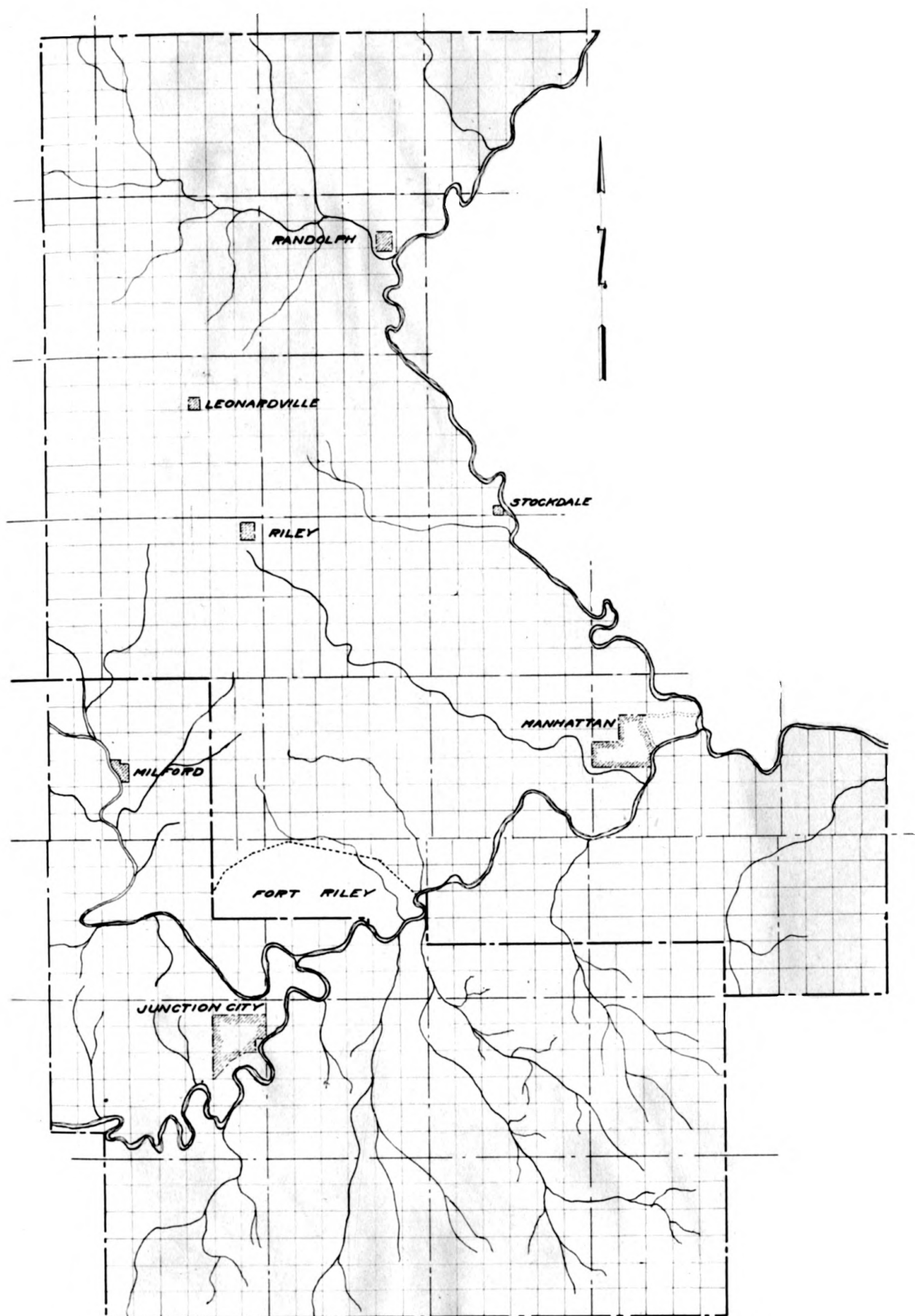
Riley and Geary Counties, Kansas, were chosen as the

population area for a specific study of this problem. These counties join each other and are located about the center of the northeast section of the State. It seems probably that the conditions of these counties are typical of those prevailing in many other parts of the State.

In area, Geary County is 104th in size, being the second smallest county in the State, while Riley County ranks 84th in size. About two-thirds of Geary County is rough pasture land, while about one-fifth is fertile bottom soil lying along the Smoky Hill and Republican Rivers and the many creeks emptying into them. Riley County compares favorably with Geary in this respect, although there may be more prairie and bottom lands. The Blue River forms the eastern boundary line for Riley County while the Kansas River crosses the southern portion. The soil of the two counties is of residual formation - sandstone and limestone overlaid with wind drift material which is now lodged and covered with grass and other vegetation.

Both counties were organized as counties in 1855. The original foreign born settlers came from Sweden, Germany and Great Britain. A large proportion of the American born settlers came here from Missouri, Illinois and Iowa just preceding the Civil War.

The total population of the two counties combined was 33,994 in 1928. The total rural population was 13,199. The



Map No. 1. Riley and Geary Counties, Kansas.

rural population is referred to as that in the open country and the small towns under 2,500, which does not include the cities of Manhattan, countyseat of Riley County, Junction City, countyseat of Geary County, and the Fort Riley Military Reservation. The total rural population of Geary County was 3,941 while that of Riley County was 9,258.¹

The following table shows the relative decrease in rural population in the two counties from 1920 to 1928:

<u>1920²</u>	
Riley County rural population	9,531
Geary County rural population	<u>5,695</u>
Total	15,226
<u>1928</u>	
Riley County rural population	9,258
Geary County rural population	<u>3,941</u>
Total	13,199 -----

The Fort Riley, United States Military Reservation, consists of 19,447 acres of fertile land, situated on the Kansas or Kaw River, in the north central part of Geary County.³ (See Map page 38). This has a bearing upon the rural population of Geary County as the land cannot be used

1. Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture Census Report 1927-1928.
2. Ibid, P. 472, Vol XXVII.
3. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. IX., P. 62. Dodd, Meade and Company, N. Y., 1915.

for private cultivation. The location of this land is very suitable for small farms, such as are generally found along the Kansas River in the eastern part of the State.

FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

The number of active, inactive and partly inactive rural churches represented in both Riley and Geary Counties in 1928 with their respective denominations were as follows:

Active Churches:

Methodist Episcopal	10
Evangelical	7
Presbyterian	6
Lutheran	3
Baptist	3
Catholic	2
Congregational	1
Christian Science	1
	<u>33</u>

Partly Inactive:

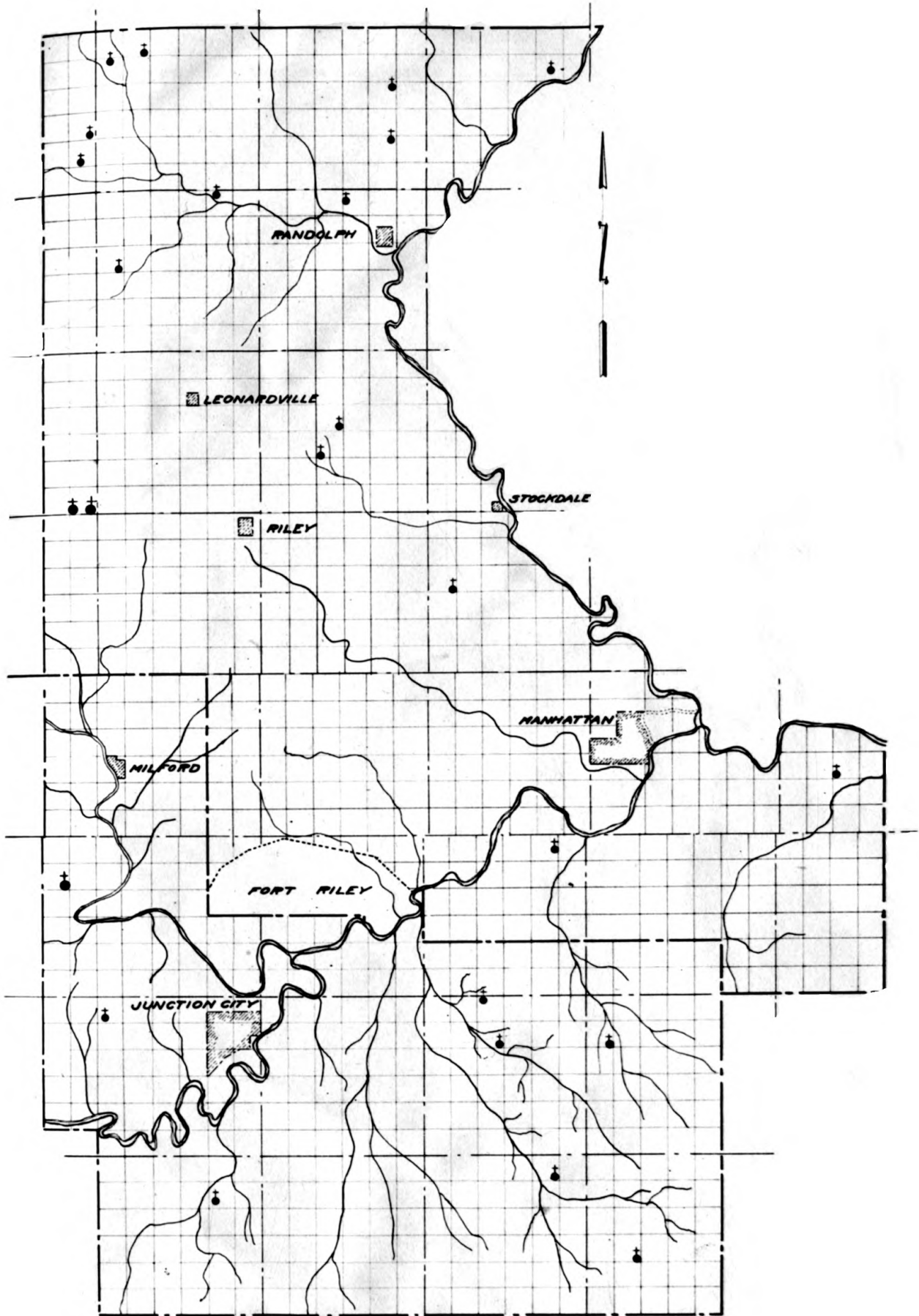
Union (Non-denominational)	2
Swedish Mission	1
Lutheran	1
	<u>4</u>

Inactive Churches:

Christian	1
Methodist Episcopal	1
United Brethern	1
	<u>3</u>

Total.....40

Eight of the active churches and two of the inactive churches are located in Geary County while twenty-five of



Map No. 2. Location of Rural Churches.

the active churches, one inactive and the four partly inactive churches are in Riley County.

The relative decrease in the rural population from 1920 to 1928 for both counties is shown by Chart No. 1, page 43. This chart also compares the rural church membership, rural church attendance and Sunday School attendance for the two periods with the population. Only membership and attendance of the rural churches is considered, therefore rural people who belong and attend church in the cities are not included.

Although there has been a considerable decrease in rural population for this area, the rural church membership, church attendance and Sunday School attendance have increased slightly during the eight year period.

The most significant factor pointed out by Chart No. 1 is that the rural church must be falling short in serving the rural population as less than one fifth are being reached by them.

A similar comparison was made for each county separately which shows that the two counties compare favorably in this respect. In Riley County (See Chart No. 2, page 44) the rural population had decreased slightly in the eight year period, while the rural church membership, rural church attendance and Sunday School attendance had increased by a small margin.

Chart No. 3, page 45 , shows the condition in Geary

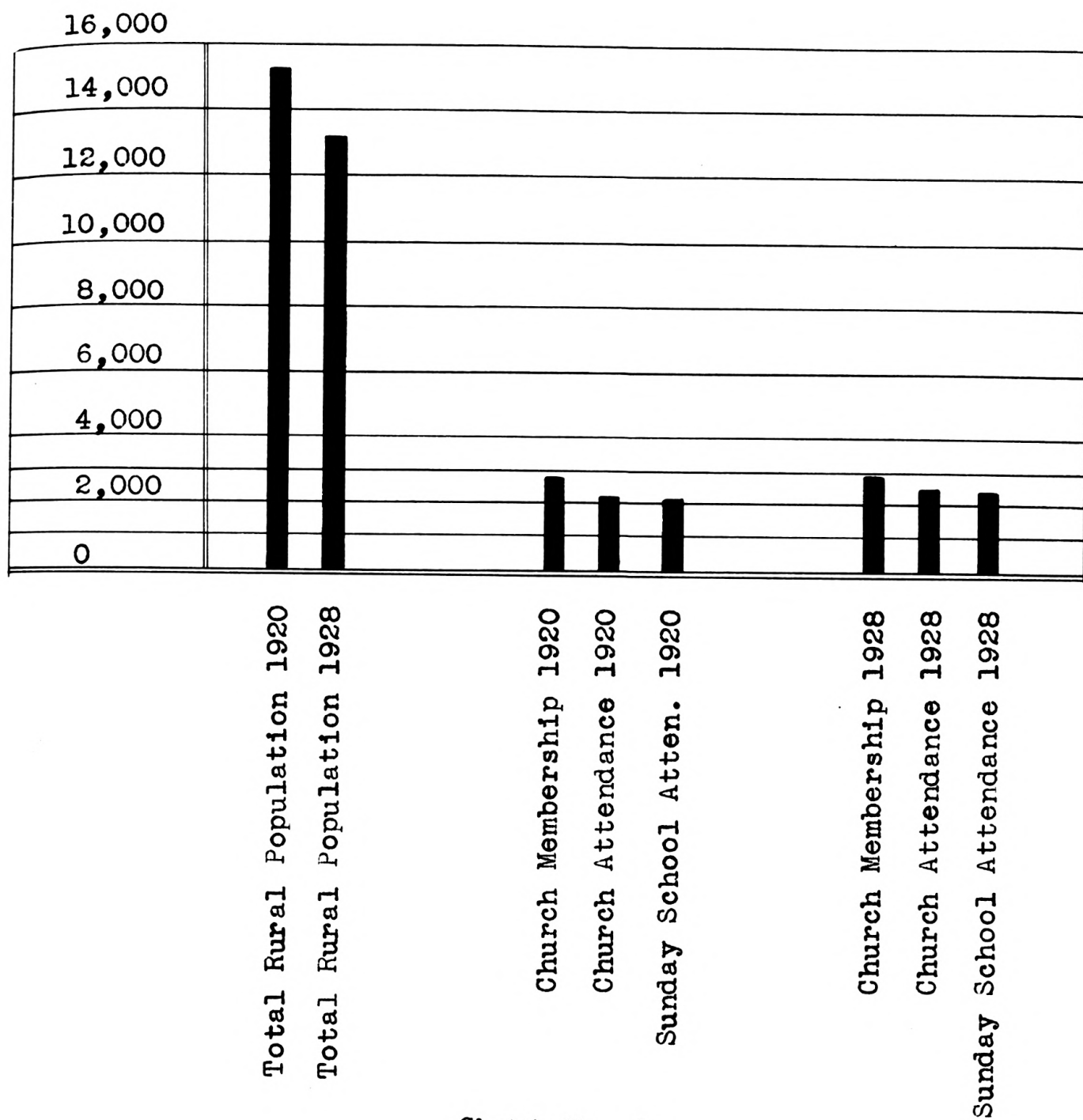


Chart No. 1.

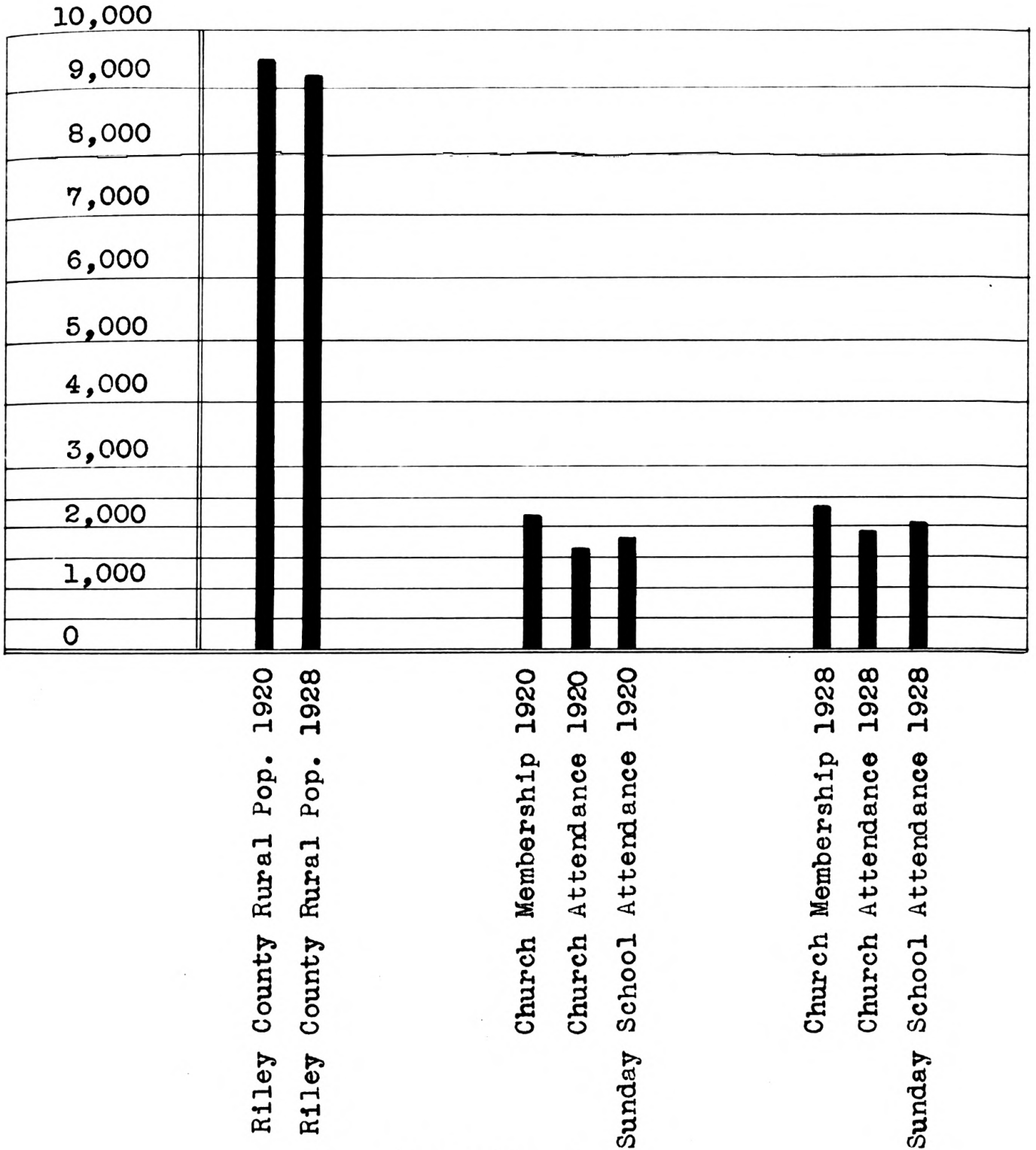


Chart No. 2.

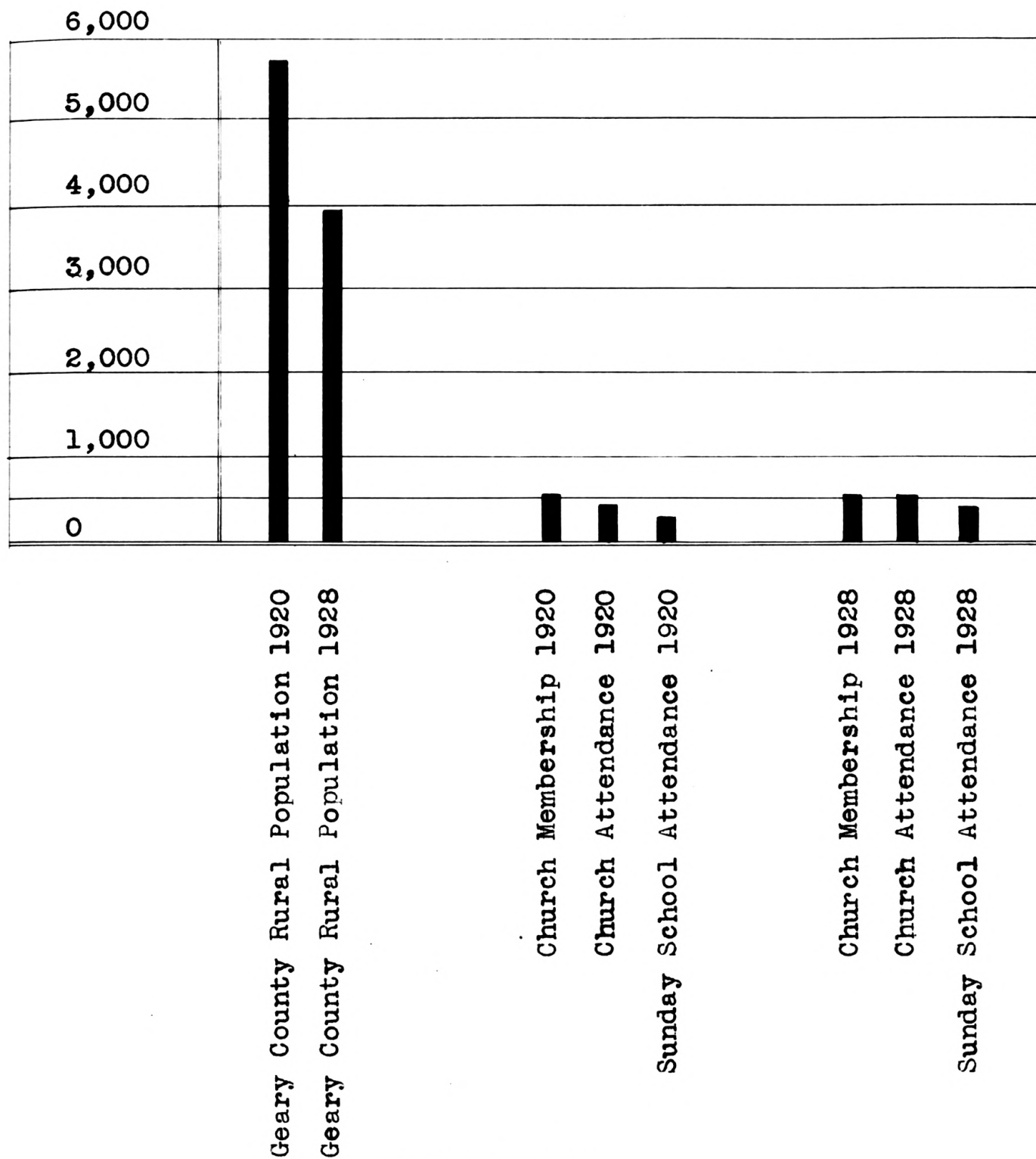


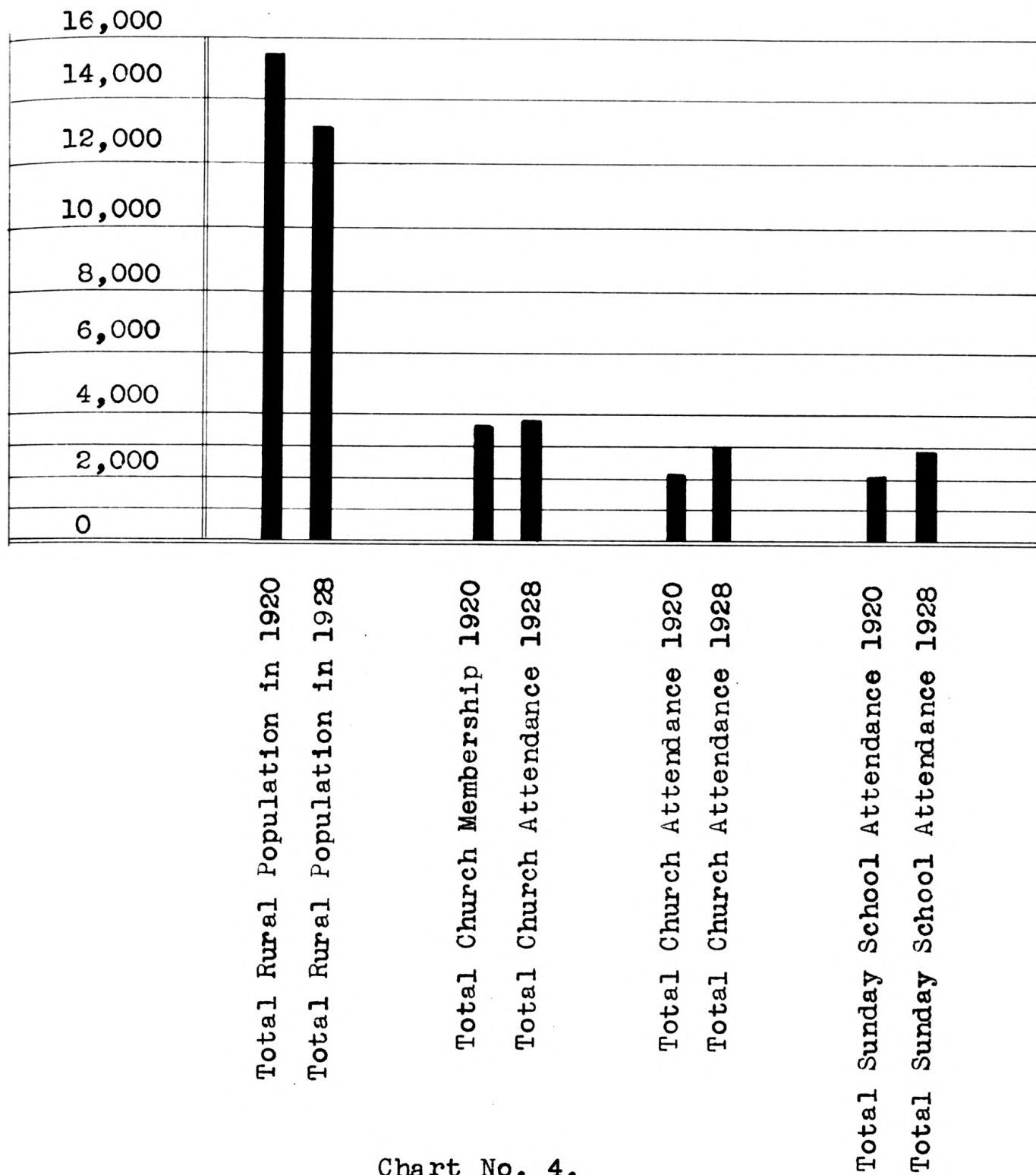
Chart No. 3.

County. The rural population had decreased more in Geary County partly due to the enlarging of farms.

Chart No. 4, page 47, shows the comparison of rural church membership of 1920 with that of 1928 for both counties combined, also the comparison of rural church attendance and Sunday School attendance for the same two years. The increase in the average church attendance and the average Sunday School attendance is slightly greater than the increase in rural church membership.

For Riley County the rural church membership was 2231 in 1920 and 2333 in 1928, an increase of 102 for the eight year period. (See Chart No. 5, page 48). This small increase may be said to be due to the reorganizing of three old churches, the starting of one new denomination and a more extensive program which was built up by a few of the larger churches. The increase in the average church attendance and average Sunday School attendance for Riley County was only a small per cent more than that of church membership.

In Geary County, the increase in membership, church attendance and Sunday School attendance is smaller than in Riley County. In fact the gain is almost too small to be noticed. (See Chart No. 6, page 49). The rural church membership for Geary in 1920 was 530 and 552 in 1928 or an increase of 22. An interesting thing to notice here is that



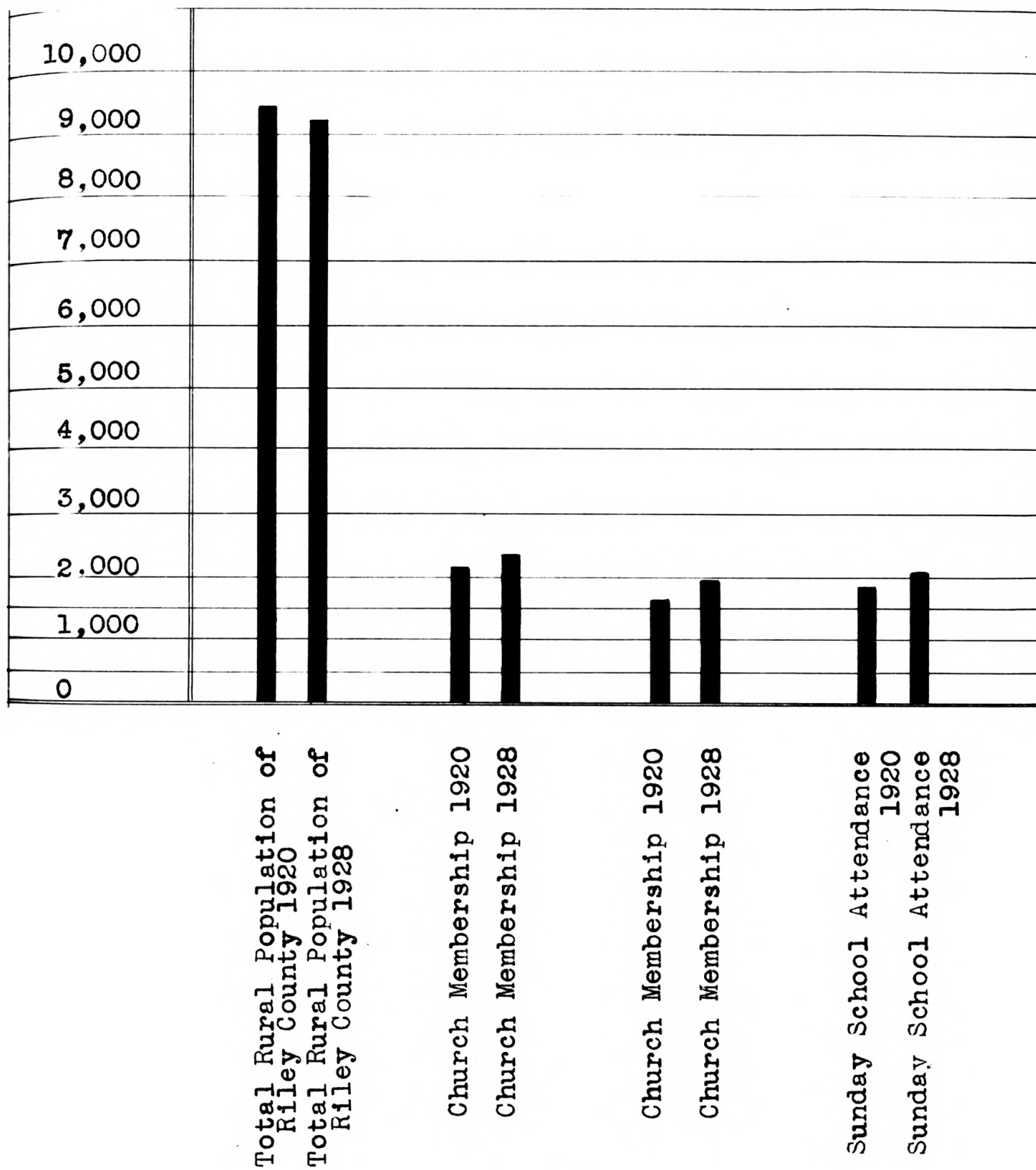
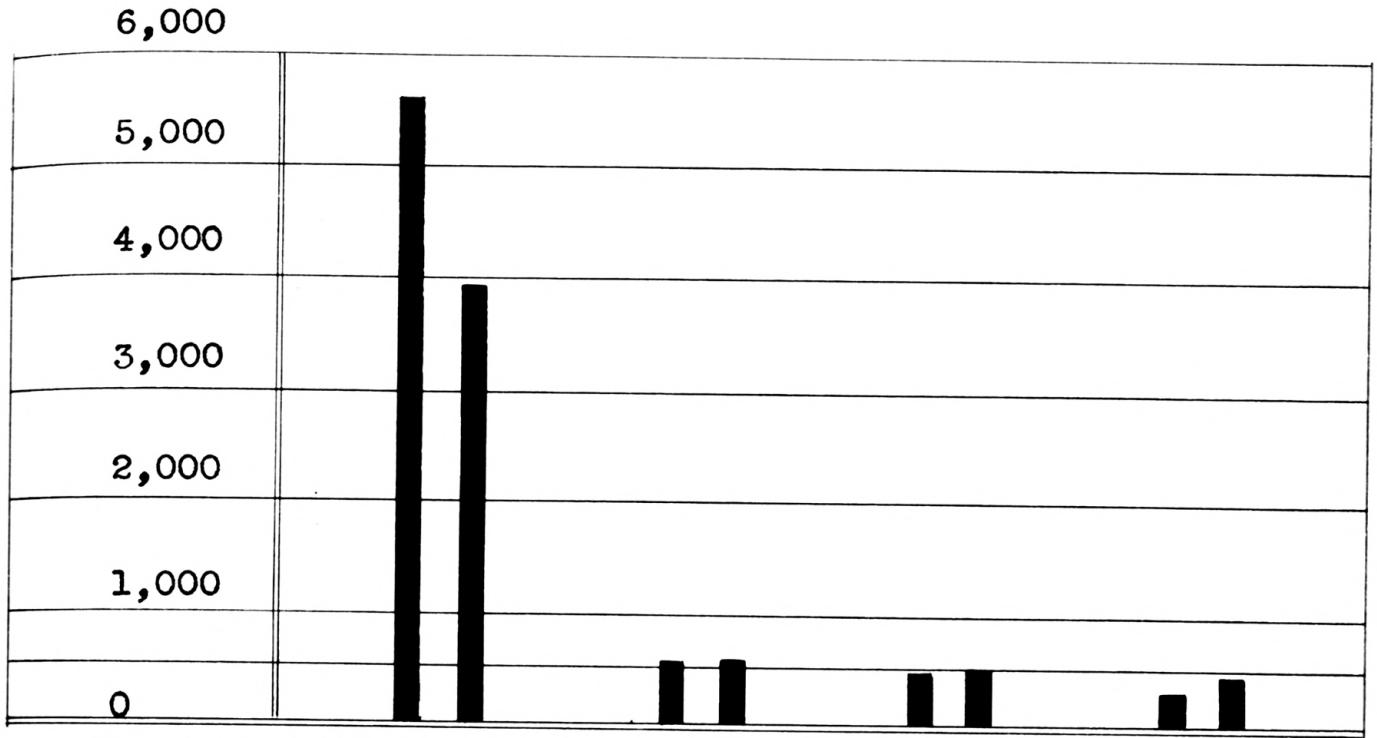


Chart No. 5.



Total Rural Population of Geary
County 1920
Total Rural Population of Geary
County 1928

Church Membership 1920
Church Membership 1928

Church Attendance 1920
Church Attendance 1928

Chart No. 6.

the St. Pauls Lutheran Church, in western Geary County, lost about forty-five members to the newly organized Lutheran Church in Junction City. But this decrease in the total county membership was counteracted by the reorganizing of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Milford, which now has a membership of fifty. The one rural Catholic Church in Geary County, reported the same membership as of 1920. Two other Protestant churches reported slight decreases in membership, while two reported a gain of ten members each and one a gain of five members over that of 1920.

According to a standard set by the Home Missions Council it is assumed that only one church is needed for a population of 1,000 or a little less.¹

This would mean that there is a surplus of about twenty rural churches in Riley County, since there is on the average one rural church to a population of 308, while in Geary County there is one church to every 492 or a surplus of four rural churches, making a total surplus of twenty-four for the two counties.

This situation checks favorably with the relative size of churches. As stated on page 24 "the churches whose membership is less than 100 as a rule do not prosper." Therefore there are twenty-four churches in the two counties that

¹. Morse, H. N., and Burham, L. Dewey, Every Community Survey of New Hampshire. Page 20. Home Missions Council, 105 East Twenty-Second Street, N. Y. 1928.

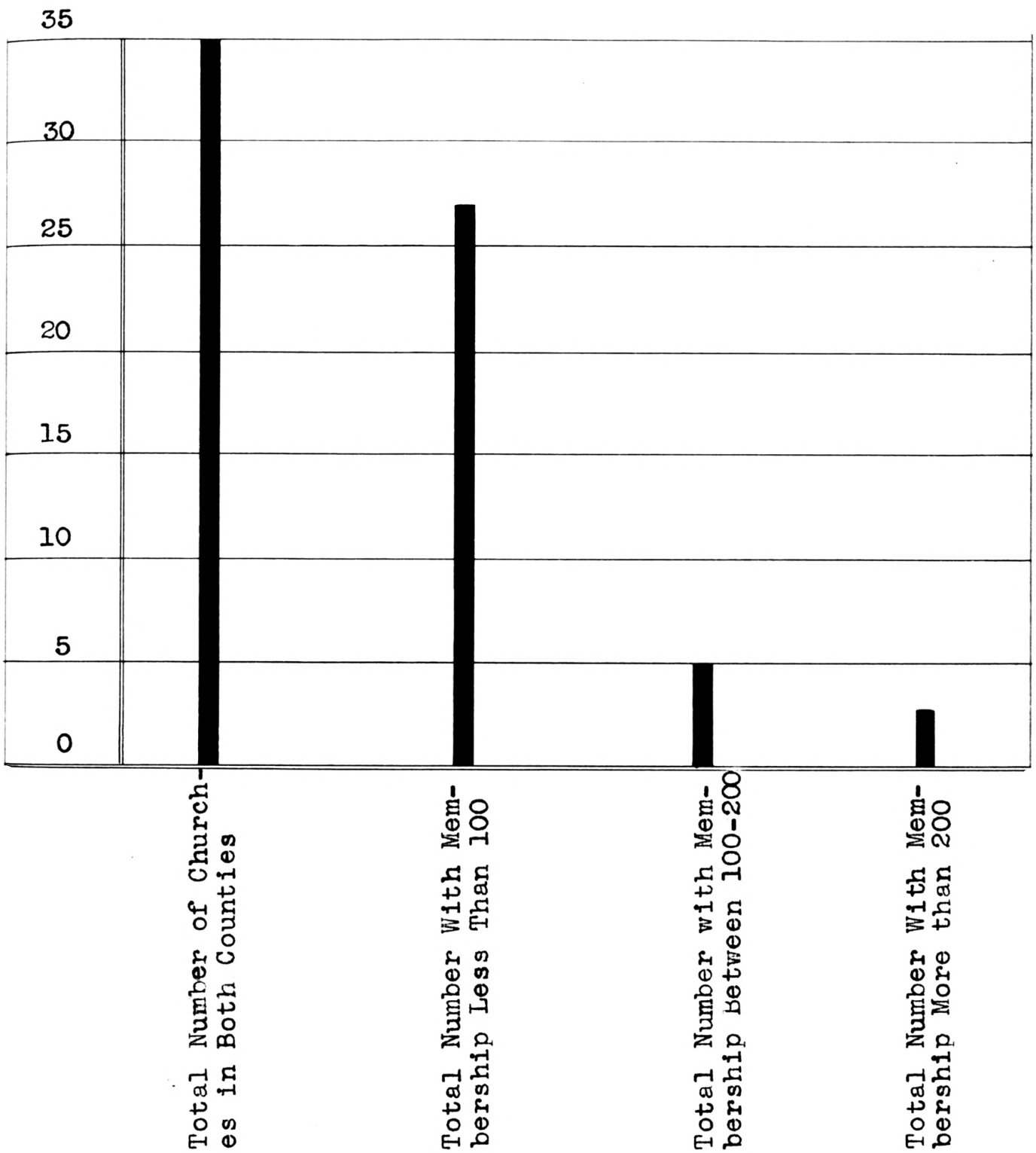


Chart No. 7.

have memberships under 100. (See Chart No. 7 , page 51). This shows that twenty-seven churches did not pass the 100 mark in membership while three churches in this group have a membership of approximately 100 each.

Five churches had memberships ranging between 100 and 200. One of the five is Roman Catholic and another German Lutheran, both of which are located in Geary County and in practically one-parish communities. The other three included in the five are the Keats Methodist Episcopal, the Fairview Presbyterian and the Fancy Creek Zion Evangelical all of which are located in Riley County and may be said to be located in one-parish communities.

The Ogden, Kansas, Catholic Church has a membership of 310. The Leonardville, Kansas, Evangelical Church reported a membership of 220. Although there are several other churches in and around Leonardville, the Evangelical Church is the outstanding church of the community. The Riley, Kansas, Presbyterian Church has a membership of 250. Practically the same overchurched situation prevails in the small town of Riley as in Leonardville.

A significant factor to note is that all churches having memberships over 100 have not lost and in every case but two there has been a decided increase in membership. These two are the Ogden Catholic Church which reported the same membership as of 1920 and the St. Pauls Lutheran which lost

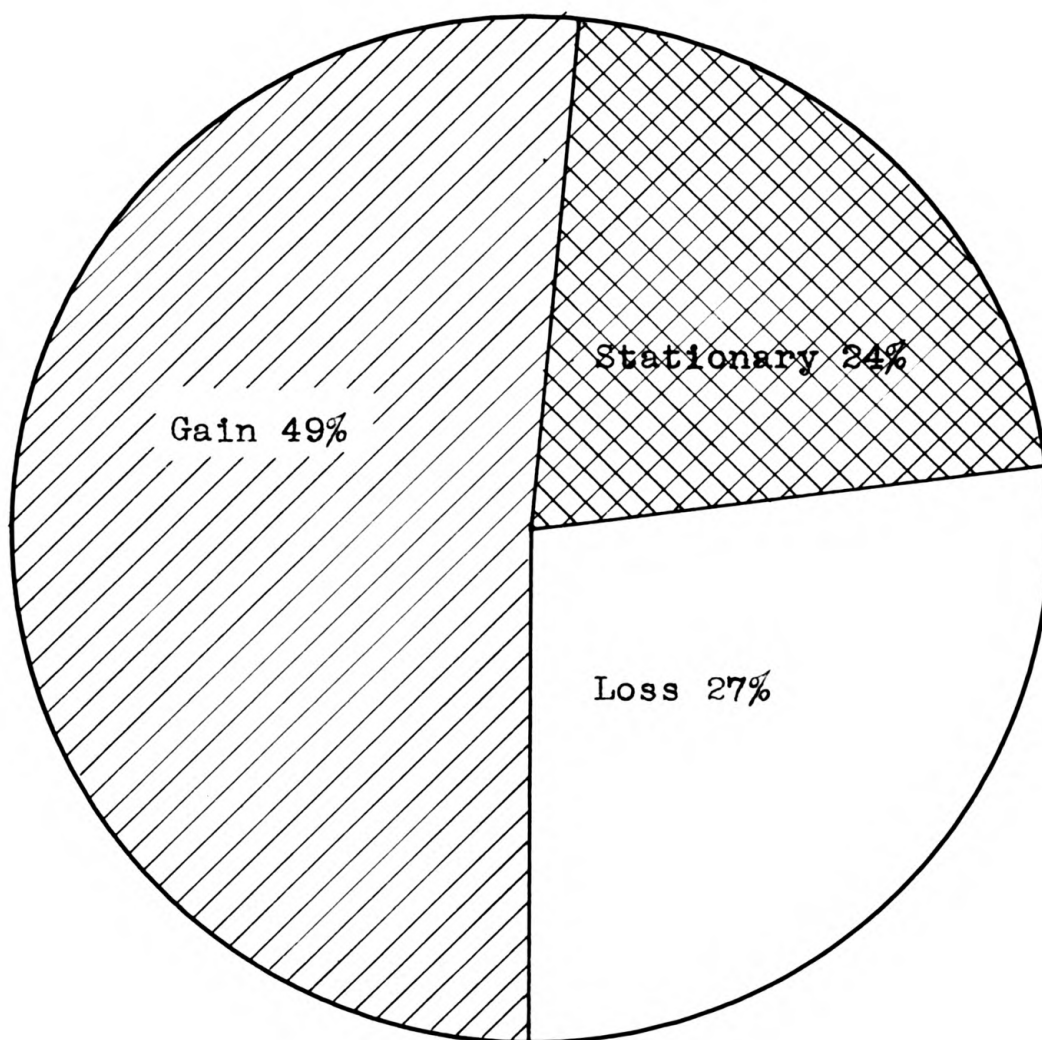


Chart No. 8. Number of Churches Losing, Gaining and Remaining Stationary in Membership

to the Lutheran Church of Junction City, Kansas, as has been noted before.

Twenty-seven per cent or a total of ten churches reported a loss in membership from 1920 to 1928. In two cases the loss was a total loss while in some instances the loss was small. However, nine churches or twenty-four per cent remained stationary. (See Chart No. 8, page 53). Forty-nine per cent or 18 churches reported a gain in membership.

Eleven or 36 per cent of the thirty church buildings are of the one room type. (See Chart No. 9, page 55). Several of these churches were built before 1900. They are decidedly inadequate to meet the demands for an efficient and well developed church program. Two or seven per cent are of the one room type, but have basements equipped for church socials.

Seventeen or fifty-seven per cent of the churches represented have more than one room each. This means that there are extra rooms for Sunday School classes and church socials. Some are modern in every respect and have basements equipped with kitchenettes and other equipment for various kinds of social functions. Although not all of the seventeen are so well equipped for a few of them have extra room, but are in a poor condition.

The average valuation of church buildings has been di-

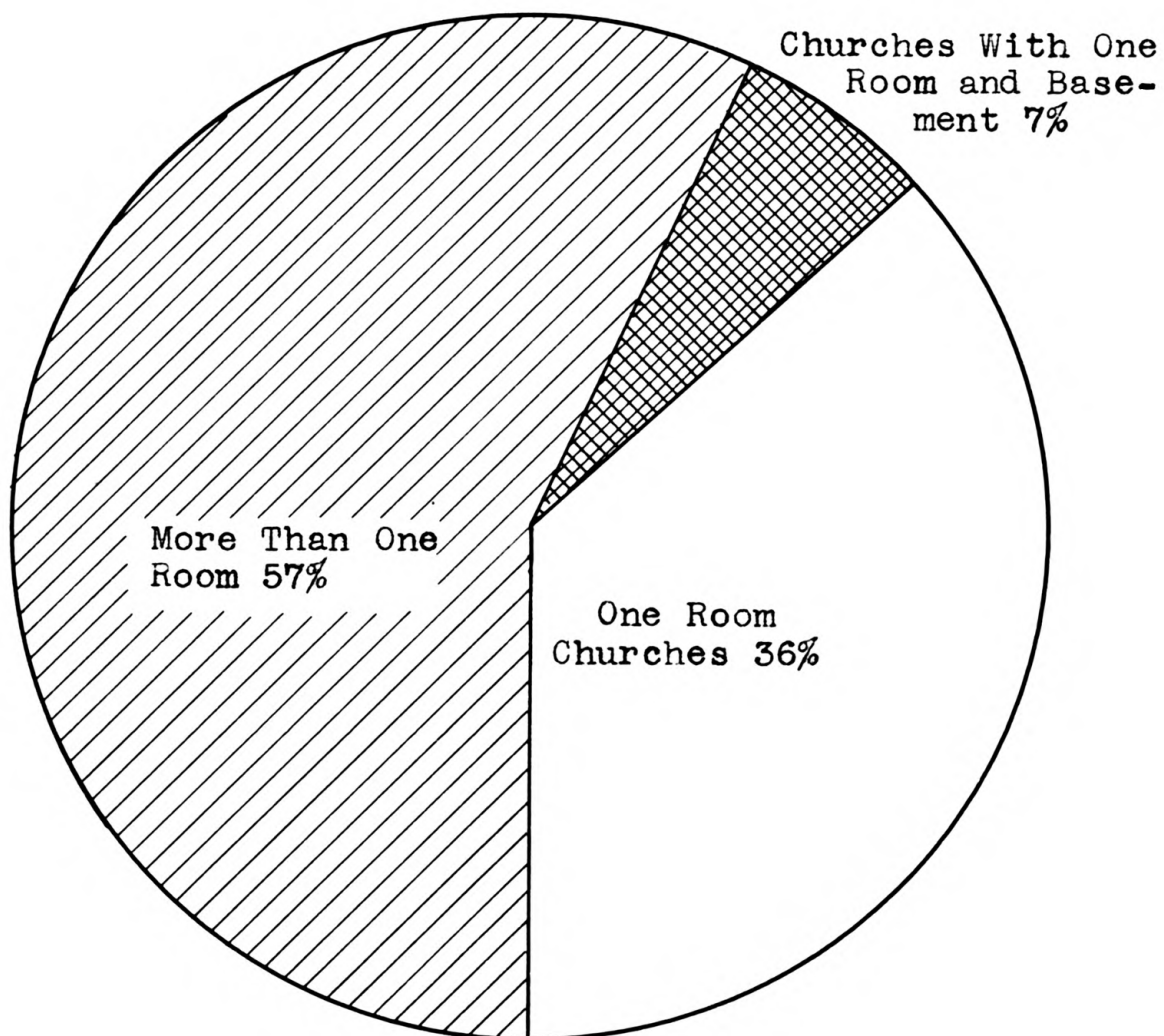


Chart No. 9. Number of Rooms to Church Buildings.

vided into two divisions for a matter of convenience in discussion and because there are two distinct types represented. The first division comprises the churches having equipment valued under ten thousand dollars. (See Chart No.10, page 57). The average valuation of property for the sixteen churches in the group is \$3,637. In some cases this includes a parsonage.

The second division is composed of eight churches that are valued above ten thousand dollars each. All churches in this group have memberships over 100. None of them have lost in membership and all of the six protestant churches have gained during the eight year period. The average valuation of property for this group is \$20,187. (Chart No. 11)

The average of salaries paid to nineteen ministers in 1928 was \$1,547 per year. This includes \$200 added for the cash value of each parsonage provided. (See Chart No.12, page 59).

The highest salary paid was \$2,500 per year, which was the total cash salary paid by two churches, the Keats and Milford Methodist Episcopal Churches. In some cases one minister serves three and four places in order to make up the total that is represented on the chart. One minister who was paid \$900 per year, operated a small farm. The two lowest salaries reported were \$500 per year, but one is a farmer and the other a college student.

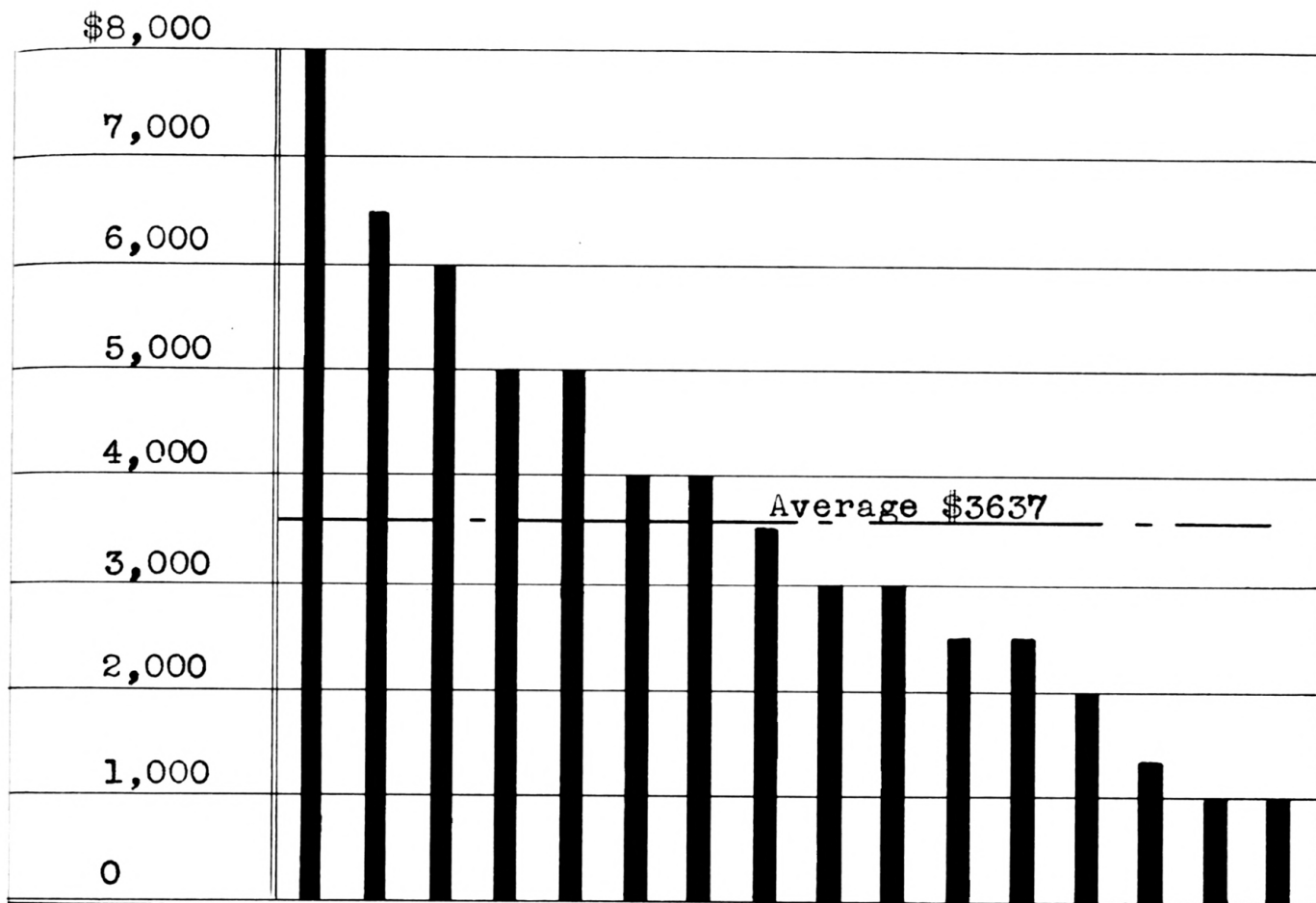


Chart No. 10. Valuation of Church Buildings Less Than \$10,000.

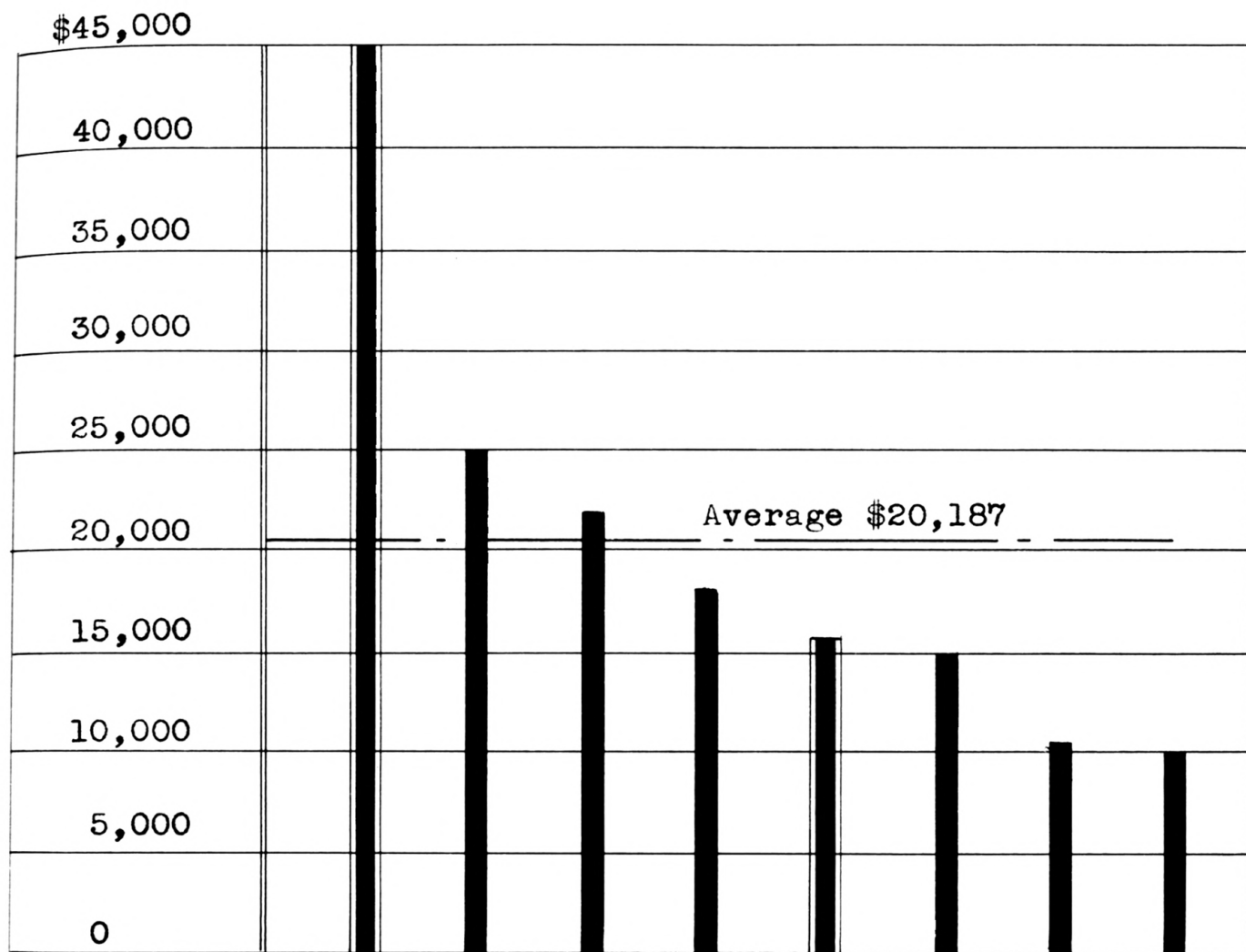


Chart No. 11. Valuation of Church Buildings Over \$10,000.

■ Catholic Churches

■ Protestant Churches

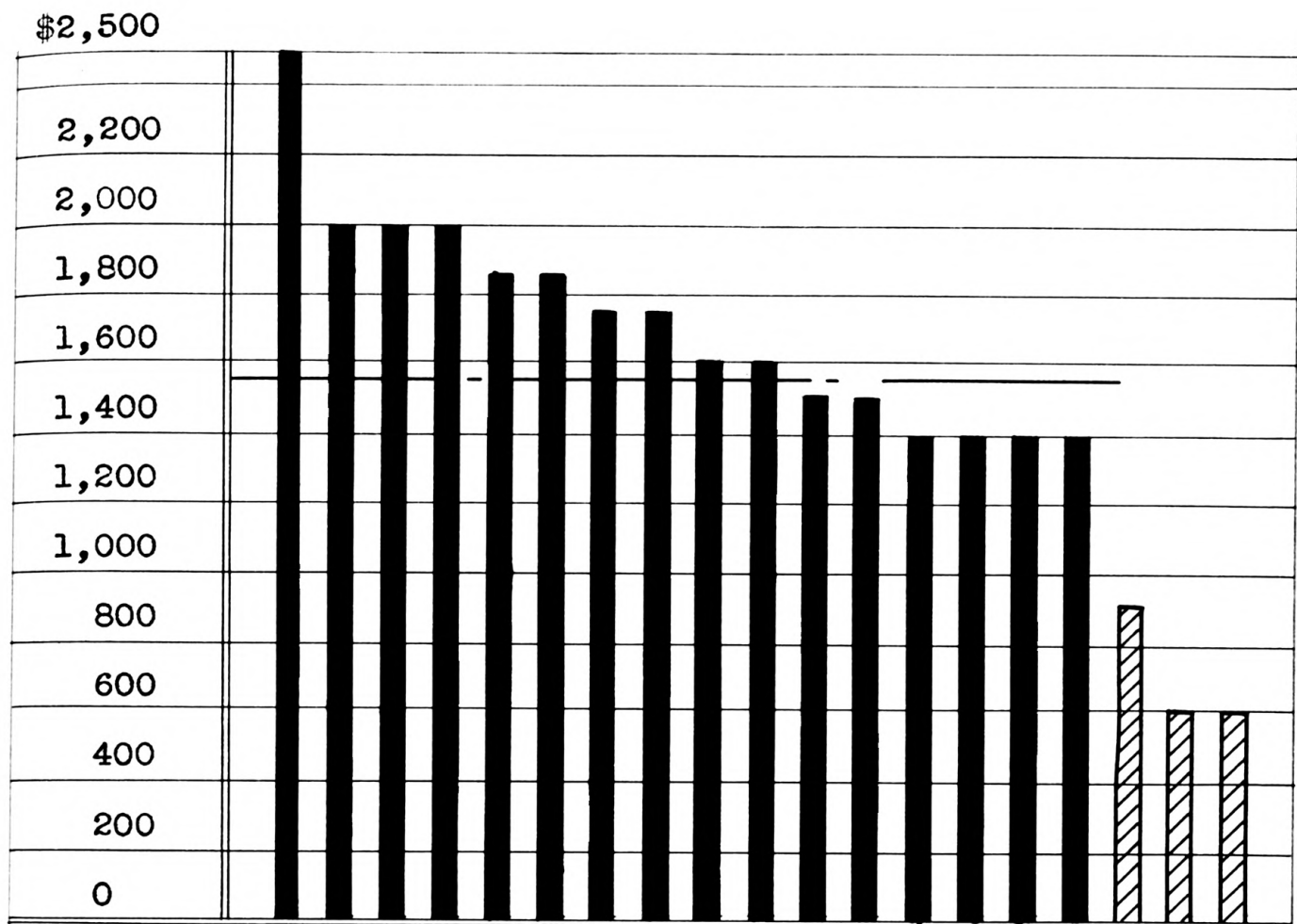


Chart No. 12. Salary Scale of Ministers

Figure Includes \$200 Per Year as Value of Parsonage When Provided.



Represents Ministers Having Other Occupations

Eighteen of thirty-four churches or fifty-three per cent reported that a financial system was used. (See Chart No. 13, page 61). Twelve of these used the budget system. The other six used the every member canvass and pledge systems. Sixteen or forty-seven per cent reported that no particular financial system was used.

Of the thirty-four churches, five or fourteen per cent received mission aid. (See Chart No. 14, page 62). Two of the churches receiving mission aid are in Geary County. One is a small German Paptist church located in a Methodist community. The pastor of this church stated: "It is hard for us, since most of the people in this community are Methodists and do not support this church in any way." The other church is a small Presbyterian Church located in the midst of a Catholic and Methodist community. The key person reported the following: "We are greatly handicapped as there is a strong Methodist Church and community on one side and Catholics on the other side." Three small churches in Riley County received mission aid in 1928, all of which might be said to be in overchurched communities. (See Map No. 3, page 63).

The churches which are practically one-community churches seem to be furnishing a variety of social functions for the community. For example, the Keats Methodist Episco-

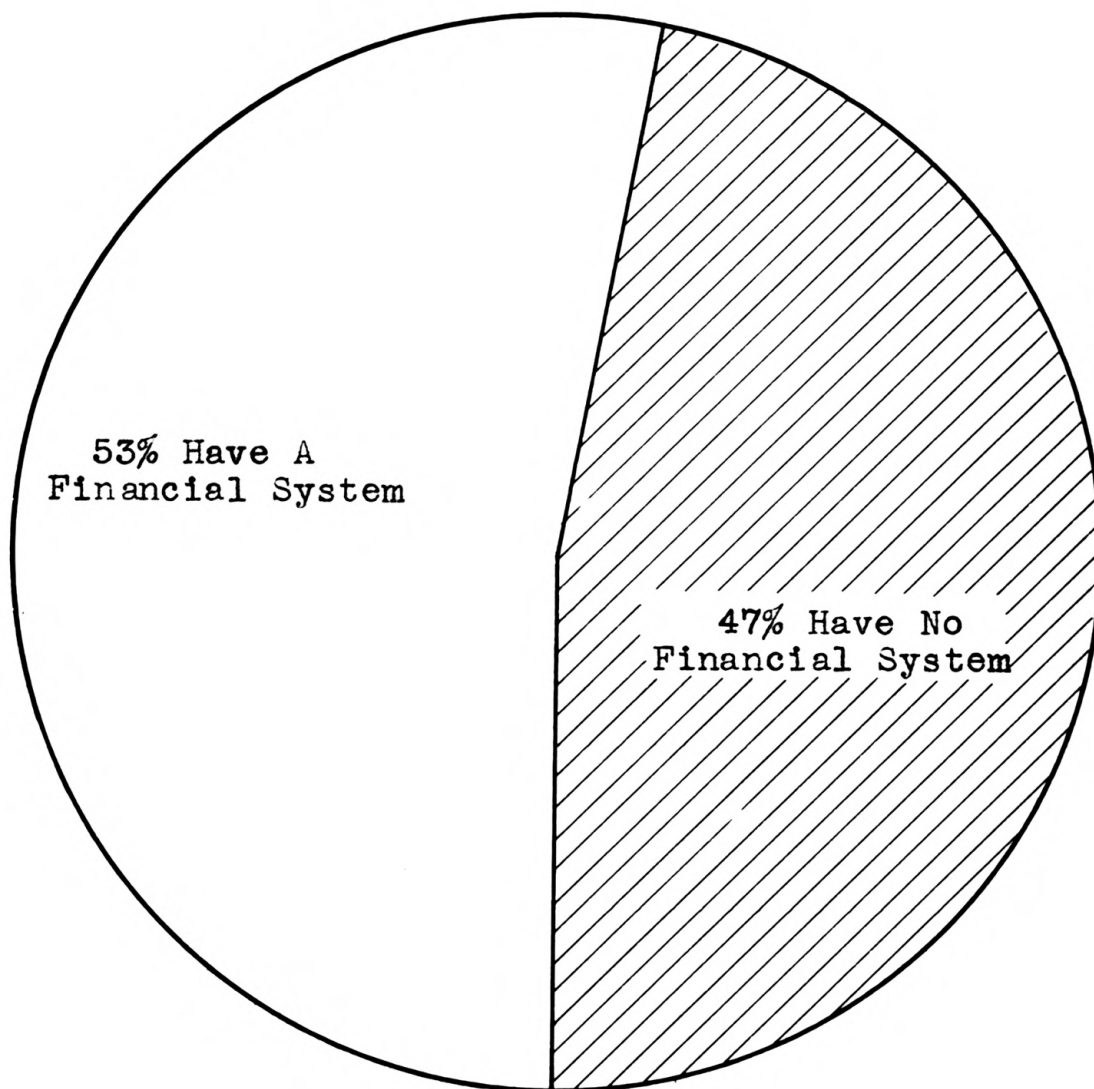


Chart No. 13. Percentage of Churches Using Financial Systems.

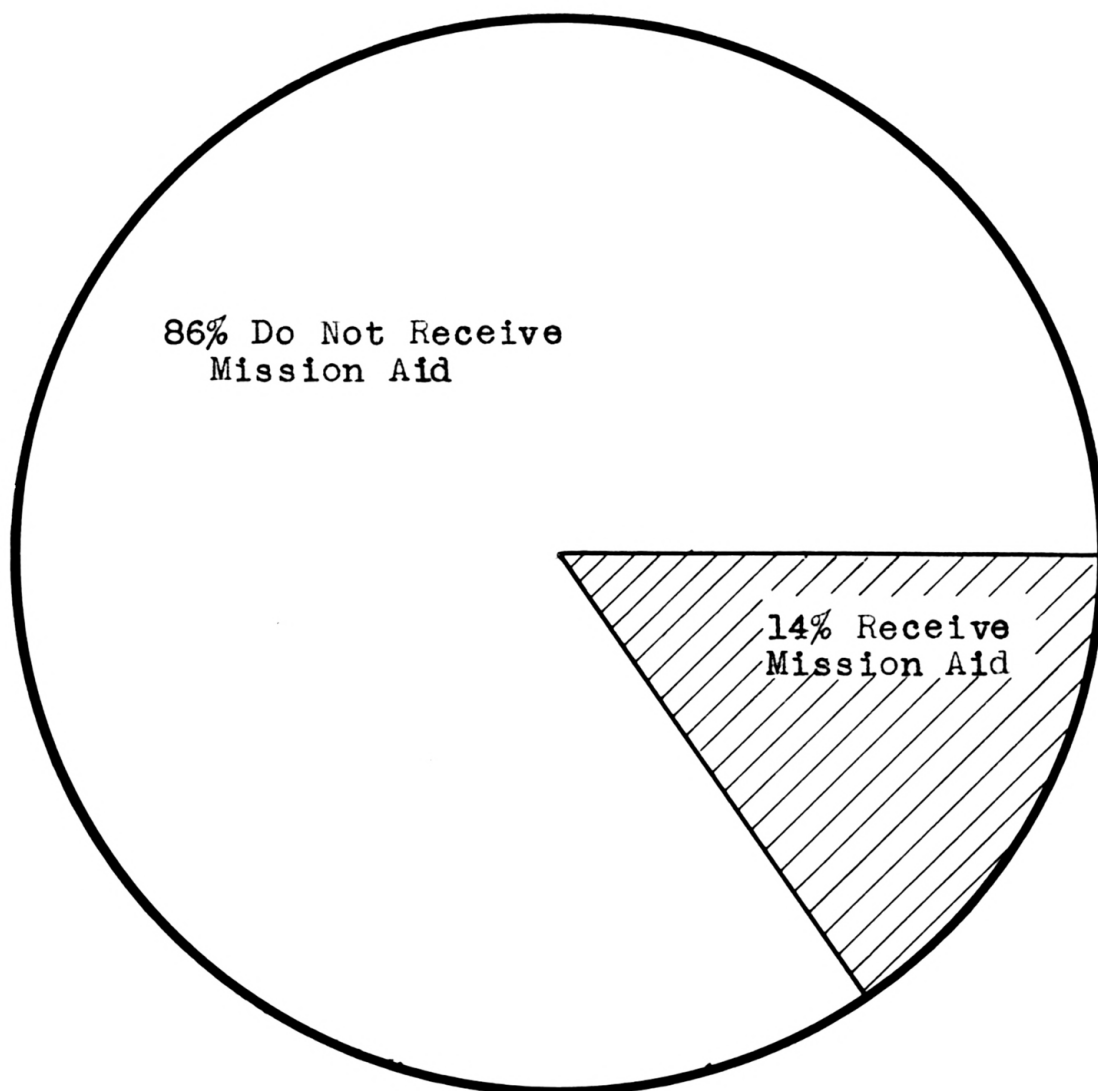
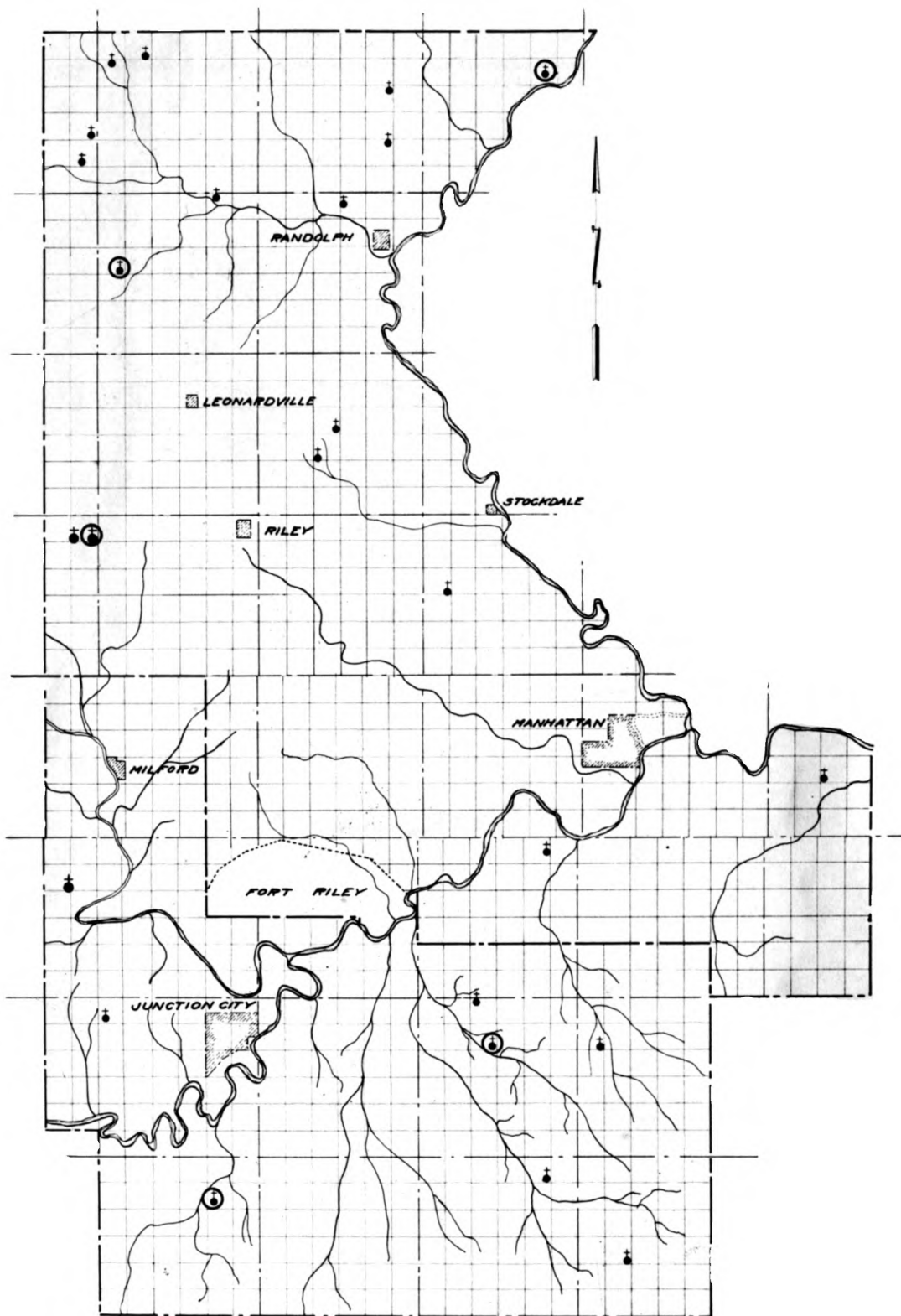



Chart No. 14. Percentage of Churches Receiving Mission Aid.



Map No. 3.  Churches Receiving Mission Aid.

pal Church is the only church in the little town of Keats and there is no church in the Keats rural territory. Here we find the church cooperating with the grade and high school in an extensive community program. The church owns a community house which serves for church socials and also for high school basketball games and parties. Another significant thing to note about this church is that the Sunday School is exceptionally well organized with teachers all of whom are college graduates from the teacher of the primary class to superintendent.

Fifty-three per cent of the churches have ladies aid societies and twelve per cent have missionary societies. Only one-half of the churches have young peoples' meetings. There was one club for men reported. See Chart No. 15, page 65).

Four churches, all of which are located in Riley County, Kansas, were reported as being partly inactive. Two of these are union or non-denominational churches. One union church is located at Ogden, Kansas, which is at the eastern gateway of the Fort Riley Military Reservation and is for the greater part a Catholic community. Protestant denominations had failed in conducting a church here and the church was inactive before the World War, but was revived by the new people who moved in during the War period. A new

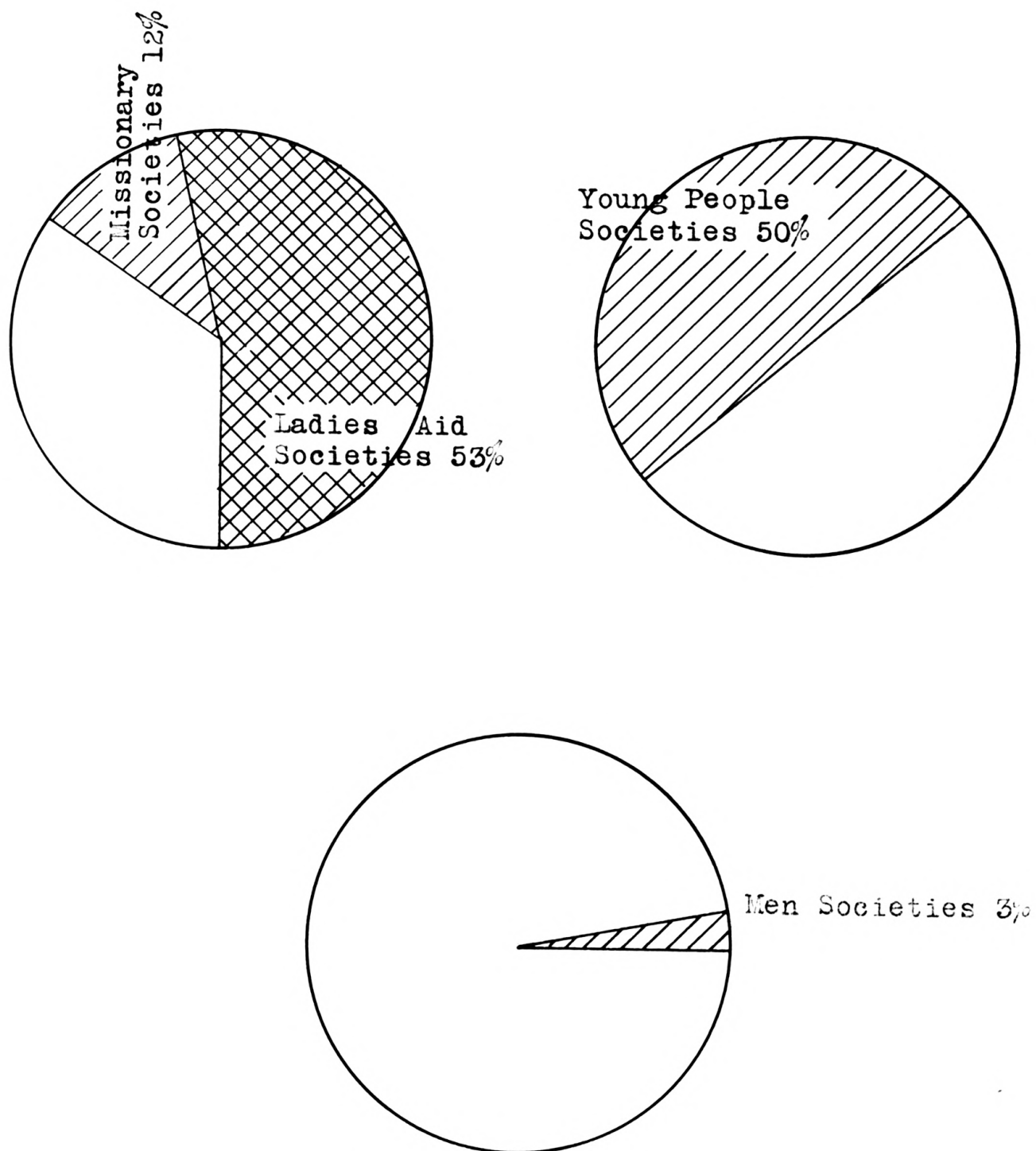


Chart No. 15. Social Organizations

church was built, the membership reached almost 100 and the church was very active socially. At the close of the war, many of the leaders moved away, which resulted in the church becoming entirely inactive as far as church organization is concerned. A good Sunday School is functioning and occasionally preaching services are held. The Protestant people of the community do not consider that they have any denominational ties and an interesting thing to note is the friendly feeling toward the Catholic Church. In fact the cooperation is so close that one would scarcely notice any religious division.

The other union church is called the Ashland Union Church and is located about three miles south and west of Manhattan, Kansas. It is an old community center. A Sunday School is held and a visiting minister holds preaching services occasionally. The factors given by key persons for the decline are that many of the church leaders have moved to town and tenants and renters seem not to be interested in church activities. Also that the community is in the "killing range" of the city of Manhattan, since most of the people own motor cars. The writer noted through observation that some of the people of this community do attend church in Manhattan, although no attempt was made to determine how far the city is responsible for the decline of nearby churches.

The other two churches reported as being partly active are the Lutheran and Swedish Mission Churches both located in Leonardville, Kansas. The memberships of these churches are so small that a full time program cannot be carried on and only occasional preaching services are held.

Three totally inactive churches were found throughout the area surveyed. One is known as the Moss Springs Methodist Church and is located in the southeastern part of Geary County. The church became inactive about 1914. The building is kept in repair for funeral accommodations. Causes for the death of the church seem to be due to the fact a number of church leaders moved from the community and that a large per cent of the remaining church people began to attend church in the town of Alta Vista, Kansas, where better church programs are available. It was also hard to secure good ministers for the small church.

Liberty Chapel, a United Brethern Church in Geary County, located about six miles north and west of the Moss Springs Church, has been inactive since 1914. The congregation, which was small in numbers, could not secure and support a good minister which seems to be the main reason for the church becoming inactive. The building is used for a community house, dances being the chief social function held in the building.

The third inactive church is the Zeandale Christian

Church located at Zeandale, Riley County, Kansas, about seven miles east of Manhattan, Kansas. This church has been inactive for a number of years, although a Sunday School was held during the summer months up to 1926. The cause for the church becoming inactive may be contributed to the fact that the community is in the "killing-range" of Manhattan. Reports claim that a number of people attend church in Manhattan.

The causes for inactive and partly inactive churches stated above are merely those given by key persons of each community. After close observation from August, 1928, to April, 1929, the writer believes these causes are fairly accurate, although there seems to be several other minor causes. No data were collected on this phase as it would be an intensive study within itself.

SUMMARY AND SOLUTIONS OF THE SITUATION IN GENERAL

Walter Burr, Professor of Sociology, Kansas State Agricultural College, summarizes the rural church situation in the following way:

1. There are too many churches.
2. Rural ministers are poorly trained as well as poorly paid:
 - a. They are usually young men who consider it the

first step of the ladder.

- b. The rural field is the dumping ground for old men who are inefficient for better positions.

The solution offered by Professor Burr is one which he says is generally agreed upon by the leading rural sociologists of the day, that is, "The reestablishing of the American Parish System."¹

Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, Director of Rural Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, believes that the solution lies in making the community and parish lines co-extensive. In this way the economic, social and educational programs may be carried on efficiently with the religious program, as is the case in many strictly Catholic Communities.²

Thomas Nixon Carver thinks the approach to the solution of the rural church problem should be from the economic standpoint. The following is his view on the method of solution:

"It is said that the great problem of the country church to-day is that of an adequate support of the ministry. How can the ministry be adequately supported? One obvious answer is to reduce the number of churches, where there are

1. Burr, Walter H., Class Lectures, 1928.

2. O'Hara, Rev. Edwin V., "The Church and the Country Community." The Macmillan Co., N. Y. 1927.

too many churches for the community to support. This is a good answer; perhaps that is the easiest way, but it is the second-best way. Another way is to build up the community in order that it may furnish adequate membership and adequate support for all the churches. This may be a harder way, but where it is not impossible it is the best.

"There was a time when the finance ministers of European governments were hard pressed to provide a revenue for the expenses of the state. They eventually found that the best way to get adequate support for the state was to increase the prosperity of the country. When they began studying how to make the country prosperous, the science of national economy, or political economy, was born. When they who are charged with the task of raising money for the support of the churches and the ministry awaken to the fact that the best way to secure adequate support is to make the parish more prosperous, the science of parish economy will be born. This will be, for our rural churches, as fortunate an event as the birth of political economy was for modern governments.

"Of course there should be continued emphasis, in the teachings of the church and the pulpit, upon the plain economic virtues of industry, sobriety, thrift, practical scientific knowledge, and mutual helpfulness; but much more

emphasis than heretofore should be placed on the last two. Practical scientific knowledge of agriculture and mutual helpfulness in the promotion of the welfare of the parish are absolutely essential, and unless the churches can help in this direction they will remain poor and inadequately supported. For those who think that the church should hold itself above the work of preaching the kind of conduct that pays, or the kind of life that succeeds, the economic law stated above is the strongest argument."¹

According to Elizabeth R. Hooker, United Churches are proving successful throughout America, which offers a solution for the overchurched conditions in the small town and country communities. The four most successful types of United Churches, discussed by Miss Hooker, and a brief summary of each are as follows:

1. The Federated Church which is composed of two or more organized churches differing in denomination, each related to its own denominational body, which have entered into an agreement to act together as regards local affairs.

2. The Undenominational Church, usually known as a "Community Church." It may represent all denominations co-operating as one, or it may disregard denominations altogether. It is not connected with any denominational body

1. Carver, Thomas Nixon, "Principles of Rural Economics." PP 353-354 - Ginn & Co., Boston. 1911.

in any way.

3. Denominational United Church, which signifies a church, connected with a single denominational body, that has definitely undertaken or had allocated to it responsibility for the religious needs of a public not confined to one denominational group, and that includes in its membership — whether regular or associate — elements of different denominational groups, and that includes in its membership — whether regular or associate — elements of different denominational origins.¹

"Though not generally familiar to country laymen, such a plan known as church federation is now under way and well developed in such sections, especially in New England, where it originated. By federation is meant simply the cooperation and working together of churches for the common good. In many respects it is a movement among churches analogous to that of consolidation among schools.

"Federation does not necessarily mean the renunciation of denominational principles on the part of those who constitute the new union. It means only the subordination of creed and doctrine, and the emphasis of common Christianity in an effort to elevate mankind by improving the social and

1. Hooker, Elizabeth R., "United Churches." Chapters II, III, IV, V. George H. Doran Company, N. Y. 1926.

spiritual conditions of a local community. It means, in the concrete, that instead of attempting to half maintain four or five unpaid ministers and struggling churches in one parish, the available funds and energy shall be consolidated and directed toward the decent support of one or two ministers and churches. Federation means, briefly, increased salaries for ministers, larger congregations and Sunday schools, better church buildings, increased social, religious, and civil consciousness, and a more Christ-like spirit of harmony and unity. Its fundamental element is the one needed in all rural progress, namely, cooperation."¹

"The report of the Country Life Commission contains the following statement concerning it: 'This movement for federation is one of the most promising in the whole religious field, because it does not attempt to break down denominational influence or standards of thought. It puts emphasis not on the church itself, but on the work to be done by the church for all men —churched and unchurched. It hardly seems necessary to urge that the spirit of cooperation among churches, the diminution of sectarian strife, the attempt to reach the entire community, must become the guiding principles everywhere if the rural church is long to retain

1. Carney, Mabel, "Country Life and the Country School."
Pages 47-48. Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago. 1912.

its hold."¹

"One of the developments growing out of the Inter-church World Movement was the adoption of the "Par-standard for Country Churches." This standard was worked out and approved by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Mission Council, and submitted to a large group of the survey workers representing every state in the Union. These people had all done field survey work, and were familiar with the varieties of conditions existing in America. It should also be stated that, in addition to investigational experiences, these men had been country ministers, and knew intimately the problems of the rural parish. There was unanimous agreement that this Par-standard should be placed before the country churches of America, not as an ideal far beyond their accomplishment, but as a goal which a church might, in all reasonableness, expect to attain. Since that time, one denomination, and the home mission departments of two others, have adopted the Par-standard with slight adaptations for their own purposes.

It should be stated that no attempt has been made to give comparative value to the points in this Standard. So far, the table shows that a resident pastor on full-time counts as much as horse sheds or parking space. Obviously,

1. U. S. Report of the Commission on Country Life, P. 142. Introduction by Theodore Roosevelt. Sturgis & Walton Co. N. Y. 1911.

this is a weakness in the Standard, but it was drawn up, not for the purpose of comparative valuation, but for the purposes of suggesting minimum achievements for a country congregation of average strength.

The points covered in this Par-standard for Country Churches are as follows:"¹

Adequate Physical Equipment.	Up-to-date parsonage
	Adequate church auditorium space
	Social and recreational equipment
	Well-equipped kitchen
	Organ or piano
	Sunday-school room
	Stereopticon or moving-picture machine
	Sanitary toilets
	Horse sheds or parking space
	Property in good repair and condition
Pastor....	Resident pastor
	Full-time pastor
	Service every Sunday
	Minimum salary of \$1,200
Finance...	Annual church Budget adopted annually
	Every member canvass
	Benevolences equal to 25 per cent current ex- penses
Meetings..	Cooperation with other churches in community; systematic evangelism
Parish....	Church serves all racial and occupational groups
Religious Education	Sunday-school held entire year
	Sunday-school enrolment equal to church member-
	Attempt to bring pupils to church (ship
	Special instruction for church membership
	Teacher training or normal class
	Provision for leadership training

1. Taylor, Carl C., Rural Sociology. PP 241-242. Harper and Brothers. N. Y. 1926.

	Organize activities for age and sex groups
	Cooperation with boards and denominational agen-
Program of	(cies
Work.....	Program adopted annually, 25 per cent of member-
	ship participating
	Church reaching entire community

SUMMARY AND COMPARISONS

In some respects the situation found in Riley and Geary Counties is typical of that found in many other sections of the United States as discussed in part three. As to church membership, attendance and Sunday School attendance the conditions seem to check favorably with the general conditions throughout the United States for only a small per cent of the rural population is attracted by the rural churches. Although an interesting factor to note about these two counties is that the total membership, attendance and Sunday School attendance have all increased at about the same rate during the period from 1920 to 1928 while there has been a decided decrease in rural population, especially in Geary County.

Geary and Riley Counties may be said to be over-churched if the standard of one church to about every 1,000 population is to be considered. This is especially noticeable in one open country locality in Geary County and in the towns of Riley and Leonardville in Riley County, where there

are from three to six churches in each town, some having a membership of only twenty-five. This of course means that there are a number of churches having too small a membership to meet the requirement of 100 members and over for every church.

The average salary paid to nineteen ministers in 1928 seems to be better than that of the findings generally throughout the United States. For instance this average is \$278 higher than the average salary paid to ministers in Sedgwick County, Kansas in 1922¹ and is \$434 higher than the average salary scale in Salem County, New Jersey in 1922.²

The findings seem to show that there are two distinct types of rural churches in these two counties. One type may be called the small church, usually found in overchurched communities, and the second type is the larger and these are, as a rule, located in one-church communities. The first type composes the larger number and this group compares favorably with the economic and social conditions found generally throughout the United States, while the second group shows a much better condition prevailing. For instance the larger churches in practically every case do not show a loss in membership, but usually show a gain, while

1. Landis, Benson Y. "A Church & Community Survey of Sedgwick County, Kansas, 1922. P. 52.
2. Brunner, Edmund deS. "A Church and Community Survey of Salem County, New Jersey. P. 51. George H. Doran Co., N. Y. 1922.

this is not true of the smaller churches in many cases. The larger churches are supporting full time resident ministers, while a minister usually serves two or more of the smaller churches and in some cases the minister does not reside where any of his charges are located.

The church buildings and equipment are exceptionally good for practically all of the larger churches. The same statement applies to this group of churches in regard to financial systems used and to the social organizations and functions. In general, it may be said that the churches in this group are efficiently serving their respective communities. But, on the other hand, the group composed of the smaller churches, pulls down the total standing for the area surveyed.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AREA SURVEYED

The findings from the area surveyed seem to substantiate the belief that we need to re-establish the American Parish System or that the community and parish lines should be co-extensive. They also support the following two standards: One church to about every 1,000 population; and a membership of over 100 for every church.

These standards could be attained in Geary County through a union of the Methodist Episcopal and Congregation-

al churches at Milford, Kansas and by abolishing the two churches which are partly supported by Home Mission Aid. (See Map No. 3, Page 63). In Riley County, the problem would probably be more difficult, although the larger churches such as the Presbyterian Church at Riley, the Evangelical Church at Leonardville and the Methodist Episcopal Church at Randolph might serve as the basic churches for federation at these places, thereby eliminating a number of the small churches in and around these towns, where the over-churched conditions are especially noticeable.

The "killing range" area around the city of Manhattan should be left for the city churches to serve. The best results may be obtained by a survey of the "killing range" area to gather specific information in regard to the extent of the area, church membership and church preferences and to determine the quota of the population that is receiving religious advantage. This would enable the city churches to render a more extensive service to the people of this area. They might well cooperate in employing and directing "pastor at large" who would represent in the larger community the organized religious life of the center.

The Home Missions Council, the Council of Women for Home Missions and the Federal Council of Churches are recommending a five-year program of survey and adjustment to be carried on throughout the United States. A program of this

type in Riley and Geary Counties would seem to strengthen and hasten the above proposed recommendations. The following is a brief discussion of the purpose and objective of the program proposed by these national organizations:¹

"We believe that the time has come when American religious life must organize in larger religious units. We realize that the way in which this can be accomplished will vary in accordance with the nature of the community and the genius of the religious organizations which are found therein.

Because we believe in the principle of regional autonomy, we will encourage the efforts of our Protestant Christian brethren to overcome the religious maladjustment which our multiple sectarian organization has thrust upon them. Massachusetts has had twenty-five years successful experience with the federated church. While under favorable circumstances we would prefer a community church affiliated with a denomination, we would say nothing here to discourage churches not so affiliated as experiments.

All this, to the end that the co-operating religious forces of America may provide an adequate religious ministry within every community throughout our vast national domain,

1. Report of the Findings Committee of the National Church Community Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, January 21, 1928.

for child life, for young people, and for adults both native and foreign born:

- A ministry evangelical in spirit,
evangelistic in method;
- A ministry well rounded in its content with emphasis
upon approved method in religious education;
- A ministry mindful of the social needs of the com-
munity where it takes root and from whose soil it
grows;
- A ministry with an outreach to world service and
Christian brotherhood.

We are quite mindful that such a ministry within every community will tax the man power and resources of our churches and will not permit the waste of any competitive effort."

CONCLUSION

The survey of Riley and Geary Counties seems to indicate that the over-churched and competitive conditions prevail in this area with the result of many small and inadequate churches. But, on the other hand it shows that a number of very efficient churches are located properly throughout the counties which would form excellent bases for church federation.

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